













SOME  
ACCOUNT OF MYSELF.

BY  
CHARLES EARL OF ERPINGHAM,  
&c. &c. &c.

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IN  
**Four Volumes.**

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“ It is my intention to represent Characters such as they are in life ; but Heaven forbid that I should pourtray any person in particular.”—**LE SAGE.**

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(VOL. IV.)

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LONDON:  
PRINTED FOR W. SIMPKIN & R. MARSHALL,  
Stationers' Court, Ludgate Street.

1817.

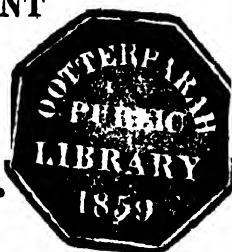
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**Plummer and Brewis, Printers, Love Lane, Eastcheap**

SOME ACCOUNT

OF

MYSELF.



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CHAP. I.

*WAYS AND MEANS.*

**TO** communicate personally with Mr. Frill was out of the question; but as I conceived that Lady Erpingham's pride would lead her to support the consequence of her husband, I did not altogether despair of inducing her to bend to circumstances, and to afford her aid in sustaining the *true* dignity of our families.

But as Mr. Frill was the sole organ of her Ladyship's will and pleasure, there was no alternative left to me. I must either have given up all idea of obtaining relief, or submit to the terms prescribed. Mr. Frill, however, being only the representative of my wife, I did not conceive there would be any impropriety in calling in the aid of a deputy, in my behalf. Every instance where I had called in the assistance of lawyers, had served to increase my disgust towards them ; and, at the time of which I am now writing, my dislike had amounted to absolute aversion.

There was no one whom I could venture to trouble, on such an occasion, but Mr. Gordon, whose management of my son had ranked him high in my esteem. Charles, as it was, had vicious propensities enough in all conscience ; but I am satisfied he would have been much worse, had not Mr. Gordon obtained some influence over his conduct.

This was indeed the first time in my life that I had asked advice from any one; nor should I, in all probability, have done it on the present occasion, had not necessity driven me to it. Mr. Gordon was already generally acquainted with my concerns; it required, therefore, but little trouble to explain the business fully to him. He kindly accepted the appointment, and I furnished him with the proper credentials to discuss the affair with Mr. Frill; and also to agree, on my part, to such conditions as might be thought advisable for the general interest of the parties concerned.

The result of the conference was such as I ought to have anticipated. Mr. Frill considered that the marriage articles ought to be the guide of her ladyship's conduct. Mr. Gordon urged the peculiarity of my situation, and the causes which had been instrumental in reducing me to my present state of

embarrassment. Mr. Frill referred to the deed of settlement, and seemed to argue with Shylock upon his bond, that unless Mr. Gordon could rail the seal from off the deed, he did but offend his lungs to talk so loud. The meeting closed with Mr. Frill declaring, that it was utterly impossible that Lady Erpingham should forego her claims in the slightest degree.

I have already told the reader, that with my usual folly of precipitancy, I had consented, that the whole of the Erpingham estates should be assigned to trustees, during the term of my natural life, in case Lady Erpingham should so long live, in order that her state and dignity should be properly maintained ; and that an income should be assured to her, adequate to the expenses of her establishment. But the consequences of my hastiness I was yet to feel. What passed between Mr. Gordon and Mr. Frill was, I imagine, com-

municated by the latter, to Lady Erpingham's trustees; for it was intimated to me, a few days after the meeting, that the friends of my wife conceived it to be their duty to exert their powers.

Hitherto, although my steward at Erpingham had regularly handed over the rents as they accrued to her ladyship's directions, the receipts were given to the tenants in my name. But the trustees now gave me notice, that they intended to take possession of the property, to prevent her ladyship from sustaining any inconvenience.

When Mr. Frill's note to that effect was delivered to me, I raged, raved, tore, and I have no doubt, acted the madman to the life. I cursed myself. I cursed my wife; and even went so far as to curse the obstinacy of the coachman who had been the original cause of my unhappy marriage.

If I had been wise, I should have



blessed the lawyer who had omitted to tie up the Bingwood estates in the same halter. How it was possible for the immense income of the Erpingham estates to be consumed in empty state, I know not; all I am certain of is, that from the day of my unfortunate marriage, I never received one shilling from them.

The only glimmering of hope which was left me, was from the assistance of my son, at his coming of age. The Erpingham estates I could not touch during his mother's life; but the Bingwood property would be at our entire disposal, and would serve to extricate me from the difficulties in which I was at present involved, and Charles from those which I was confident his natural turn for extravagance would bring upon him. His paternal property would descend to him free and unincumbered; and was certainly of sufficient extent to maintain the dignity of his family,

and to satisfy the desires of any one whose ideas were not of the most exorbitant description.

But the period to which I looked forward was far too distant to put off creditors with common excuses. I therefore determined to summon them together for the purpose of laying before them a statement of my affairs, that we should all of us know what we had to trust to. My detestation of attorneys, however, was insurmountable; and my pride forbade me to enter into any personal explanations, even had my abilities been adequate to the task. Thus situated, I again craved the friendly assistance of Mr. Gordon, from whose mild and placid manners I expected a favourable result.

I was not disappointed. They who deal with nobility are not backward in making their charges proportionate to the usual delay of payment. According to their phrasology, they cal-

culate upon the living paying for the dead. In fact, patience was their only resource. I had seen a little of mankind, but I seldom found that any tradesman would press his demand, when waiting would be the only way of getting it discharged. In this respect they bear a strong resemblance to the attorney, who always made it a point to tell the truth, whenever a lie would not serve his purpose better.

I was relieved, for a time, from further molestation, on giving bonds for the respective debts, payable within six months of my son's attaining the age of twenty-one, but bearing interest from the day on which they were executed.

I had now more than two years before me, that I could expect to pass in tolerable ease and quiet; and my means were still further increased by an unexpected dissolution of parliament.

In the commencement of my present labours, I promised that I would not willingly make any concealment of incidents, however much they redounded to my disgrace. If I had not so committed myself, I might perhaps have been induced to gloss over what I am now going to relate. Necessity is not only the mother of invention, but she also often leads us into a line of conduct, neither creditable nor in unison with sound and honest principles.

When my son-in-law, Captain Flanigan, had the impudence to propose that I should place him in one of my boroughs which were vacant, I recoiled with inward horror at the very thought of employing a sacred privilege to the purposes of fraud. From the time of the contested election, from whence all my subsequent evils had arisen, my influence in a certain assembly has constantly remained with

the party whose cause I had espoused upon that occasion. I never had any communication with the party, but when my sanction was necessary for their purposes. It was then that I declared myself with an appearance of firmness; because, to have interfered in any way, would have broken in upon my natural indolence.

At the dissolution which I have just mentioned, the trustees of Lady Erpingham thought proper to exert their newly acquired influence upon the boroughs, with a view of giving support to the party in power. My friends, who had been so long in the undisturbed possession of the seats, soon caught the alarm, and called upon me to assert the right which the trustees had endeavoured to usurp. Had it been any persons but the friends of Lady Erpingham who had thus invaded my privileges, I might have submitted; but as it was, I determined

to resist every encroachment which they should venture to make.

On a careful examination of their powers, they thought it prudent to withdraw their pretensions; but having promised the seats, in return for some valuable consideration, their inability in the performance created a considerable degree of confusion. The party in power had calculated on their partisans being returned, and it was of consequence to them that their plans should be carried into effect.

I was on the point of renewing my promises to my old friends, when I was waited upon one morning by a gentleman, who made his way to me by some excuse, which I have forgotten, but who did not leave me long in doubt as to the real motives of his visit. This was neither more nor less than to ask me if I should consider twenty thousand pounds an adequate compensation for my trouble in return-

ing six particular friends of his, who he assured me were persons that could not fail of doing the greatest credit to my recommendation.

Not being so thoroughly versed in the history of my country, as perhaps, I ought to have been, I startled at the horrible combination of bribery and corruption. The gentleman smiled at the warmth with which I expressed myself, and assured me that such practices were as “notorious as the sun at noon day.”

He then pressed me for an answer, but this I declined to give without further consideration. I had two motives for the delay. The first was a doubt whether I could reconcile the matter to my conscience. The other was an intention, if I made a bargain of that description at all, to make it to the best advantage.

The twenty thousand pounds ultimately silenced my scruples, and I re-

solved to accept that sum in case, I could not make a better bargain in another quarter. With this last view I applied to a person, who was represented as a most extensive trafficker in seats. By his means I was offered the sum of four thousand five hundred pounds each, for three seats. This I mentioned to the person who had bid the twenty thousand for the six.

As he had made the first application, I said he might have the refusal of the whole on the same terms. He promised to consider of it, but assured me that such a sum was out of the question. I was so little acquainted with the science of negotiation that, instead, of endeavouring to obtain a higher price, I eagerly closed for the three seats at the terms proposed.

The following day, my twenty thousand friend offered to purchase the whole six at the rate I had mentioned to him. But it was too late, there were



only three seats remaining. As these, however, were better than none at all, the bargain was made, and in a short time I found myself in the quiet possession of twenty-seven thousand pounds, derived from a source whence I never expected to obtain a farthing.

As the business turned out, my conscience was completely quieted. I had three members, who were staunch supporters of the right hand side of the chair, and three who were equally strenuous on the left hand side. My interest was thus neutralized, for if I did no good, I at least did no harm. Under other circumstances I might have found room for self reproaches, but as it was, I was thoroughly satisfied.

The money which the boroughs produced set both my son and myself for a time completely at ease. I made him a most liberal allowance. So liberal, indeed, that with the payment

of debts, which he had contracted, and his customary expenditure, before the succeeding winter was half gone through, there was not a vestige of the twenty seven thousand pounds remaining, and both Charles and myself were again in debt.

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## CHAP. II.

### *SUPPLY.*

IN the course of the winter, and at a time when embarrassment again began to press upon me, a prospect opened before me, which promised effectual relief for the present, and a large income for the future.

Being in conversation one night at Boodle's with a baronet of very extensive landed property, he informed me of the immense improvements he had recently effected on his estates. He told me that although his old tenants had refused to make any further ad-

vances, he had fortunately met with a surveyor of most uncommon abilities, who had recently let a great part of his lands, at three times the former rent.

“ It is astonishing,” added he, “ in what a backward state we suffer ourselves to remain in the southern part of the island. We do every thing twice over. We carry out, and we return empty handed. Our horses are so heavy that empty or loaded their pace is unvaried. Our farmers are as heavy, as their horses, and as obstinate as their mules. There is a want of energy throughout. Our bigotted countrymen are incapable of comprehending the principles of enlightened cultivation. But let us turn our eyes to the north. See there what the spirit of industry directed by the hand of science can perform, in a climate, which compared with ours, is unfriendly to the pursuits of active

husbandry. Look at the great amount of the rents realized from the Scotch estates. Examine the rapidity with which all farming operations are there conducted, and then let us blush for the stupidity of old England."

Here was an end to all my difficulties. In my imagination I tripled the rental of Bingwood estates, and felt myself again exalted to the regions of opulence.

"Pray, Sir John," said I eagerly, "favour me with your surveyor's address. I see at once the advantages. Besides, the affording every facility to the introduction of an improved system, must unquestionably be a benefit to the public at large, and entitle the promoter to the general thanks of the community."

I do not apprehend that I should have exhibited much public spirit on the occasion, had not my own interest been so materially concerned. I went

to bed in the full determination of not suffering a day to elapse before I commenced my proceedings. My waking thoughts, and even my dreams were fully occupied in arranging the several castles in the air which I was incessantly building, fit for my habitation.

After a restless night, I rose earlier than usual, and having indulged myself in counting my imaginary thousands, I dispatched a note to Mr. Alexander M'Estimate, in Saint James's Street, requesting the favour of his calling at Erpingham House at his earliest convenience. I confess, I made the request with considerable diffidence, from the judgment I was enabled to form of men of importance engaged in professional avocations, by my intercourse with the great Mr. Frill. But great folks must be allowed certain privileges, to which little folks dare not aspire. If puppies are lifted into consequence by the obse-

quiousness of those who have dealings with them, they would be fools if they did not save themselves all possible trouble, and take the most advantage of the homage paid them. All I shall ever say in blame of these great men is to censure them for not adopting the convenient method of the late Mr. Martin Van Butchell, and notify to the world, "come from ten to one, for I go to none." Such a notification under an office bell would save an infinity of vexation, and render a world of explanation unnecessary.

The town deputy of Mr. M'Estimate informed me in reply, that his principal had left town only half an hour before my note was received, to proceed in the first instance to his extensive farm in Oxfordshire, from whence he was to go into North Wiltshire for the purpose of viewing some large estates, which had been recently placed under his direction in that part of the

country. In eight or nine days Mr. M'Estimate was expected to return to London, but would even then have hardly a moment to pay attention to any new connexion.

How unlucky! Eight or nine days to be thus wasted and frittered away. But what was to be done? I thought at one moment of following Mr. M'Estimate, that I might receive his instructions as to the preliminary proceedings, but I gave up the idea, fearful that I might offend the gentleman by coming unbidden into his presence, and thereby lose all the advantages I expected to derive from his able assistance.

To expedite the business, as far as lay in my power, I followed the example of Mr. Evenington on his marriage with Miss Broad, and gave notices to every tenant upon the Bingwood property, without exception, to quit their farms at the ensuing Michael-



mas. As was the case upon the Broad estates, some held by leases, which, to my great regret, rendered all notices unavailing, but I was fearful if I omitted any, I might injure myself.

The eight or nine days elapsed without Mr. M'Estimate making his appearance, but on the twelfth I had the supreme felicity of an interview with him. I dare say, the reader is sufficiently acquainted with my impatient disposition, to make it unnecessary for me to tell him that on the tenth and eleventh days of Mr. M'Estimate's absence, my time was almost wholly occupied in traversing St. James's Street, in eager expectation of that gentleman's return.

Mr. M'Estimate fully justified the eulogium, which my friend the baronet had bestowed upon him, for he undertook, without seeing the estates, or even enquiring whether they were high

or low rented, to increase the rental threefold.

“ His countrymen,” he said, “ who were the only people upon earth that thoroughly understood the true principles of agriculture, must have their lands free from incumbrances of every description, the rent excepted, which must be fixed and decided. They were wholly unused to tythes and cesses. They must not be clogged as to their mode of effecting improvements. Covenants were a kind of things, which were well enough adapted to the narrow minded, and still narrower comprehension of the grovelling Englishman, but were totally beneath the attention of the enlightened and scientific Scotchman. Covenants were, indeed, invented to restrain the bad farmer, and ought never to prevent the good farmer from benefitting himself, and the property he cultivates. Upon the new system every accommodation must be

afforded for the carrying on the operations, or how could it be expected that rents should be paid, which in this part of the country, until very lately, had never been heard of. A little sacrifice might reasonably be expected to be made in bringing a new system to perfection, but once made the way hereafter would be smooth and clear."

I was delighted at the eloquence of Mr. M'Estimate. There was a grandeur in his conceptions which surprized me, and a comprehensiveness of ideas which astonished me. He appeared to have a soul for great designs, together with mental and bodily powers for carrying them into execution.

At the very first interview I formally appointed him to the superintendence of the Bingwood estates, attaching only one condition to his assumption of authority. This was merely an undertaking on his part to proceed with me

to Bingwood without a moment's loss of time.

Early the following morning we set off on our journey. He took a cursory view of the property, and declared himself in raptures at the great capabilities, which it afforded. The land he discovered in an instant to be all of it admirably adapted to the improved husbandry. I confess myself to have wondered a little at hearing that it was *all* admirably adapted, and ventured to point out that the soil had all the varieties, from the stiffest clay, to the lightest sand. But all sorts were equally well adapted to Scottish cultivation, and I was asked what would become of a country like Great Britain, if one particular soil alone was susceptible of improvement. The question was put in a tone of voice which completely silenced me, and prevented me from making any other enquiry, lest Mr. M'Estimate might choose to fancy him-

offended, and desert me at a moment when I most wanted his assistance. I remember, that at the time I managed to swallow a mode of expression, which certainly amounted to impudence, I resolved to retaliate as soon as my purposes were served.

Mr. M'Estimate gave me no intimation of the course he meant to adopt, but in less than three weeks the Scotchmen poured upon Bingwood like a flight of crows. Advertisements had been inserted in the Northern papers, and from the enormous quantity that made their appearance, Scotland must most assuredly have suffered from the sudden emigration. For every farm which was declared to be vacant, there were at least a score of competitors. But as all were in want of situations, and all willing to establish themselves and their abilities on my property, they considered that they were entitled to every consideration on my part. Their

proverbial modesty was, indeed, particularly striking. They were ready to take any farm upon Mr. M'Estimate's recommendation, but such as I could not provide for, I was expected not only to entertain during their stay at Bingwood, but to recompense for their time, and expences from their leaving the "land of cakes," till their return to it.

I remonstrated with Mr. M'Estimate upon this demand, to which I conceived that I had no right to accede, but I was answered by questions. How could I expect that his countrymen would run a personal risk to benefit me, and to improve the face of the country in general? Was it not reasonable that they receive a remuneration, when their great object was my benefit?

From the bevy Mr. M'Estimate selected such as he thought proper to retain, and appointed them to their

respective situations, on which they were to enter at the stipulated time. I compromised with the remainder to allow them five pounds each, upon a release from all further claims, to which Mr. M'Estimate assured me I was liable. I was not lawyer enough to be exactly aware of the extent of my liability, but I was indolent enough rather to make a small sacrifice than to increase my troubles. They would not, perhaps, have been contented with so moderate a compensation, had I not given way to a portion of my old obstinacy before the worthy surveyor. It seemed that they followed his advice, or rather directions, and he acquired additional merit with me for the settlement of the business. I cannot say that the carrying the arrangement into execution was exactly pleasant, when I found that I had to pay very nearly two hundred claimants.

All my new friends were satisfied.

and I heard murmuring from no other quarter, except among my old tenants, who were thus thrown upon the wide world, and driven from the farms, which their forefathers had tilled, and upon which, many of them had grown grey.

But was I to sacrifice myself, and my country to provide for a few individuals, in the same grovelling manner in which they had been brought up? Was I for their sakes to abandon the most brilliant prospects? No! let them learn to enlarge their ideas, to take pattern by the examples, which were about to be set them, and there would be ample scope for the employment of their industry. They must have derived the most tremendous advantages from their previous occupations at such low rents, and if they had been improvident, what could they expect, but to be the sufferers for their former folly. They had only to thank my good nature, and



want of experience that had left them so long in possession of their enormous profits, but they could not rationally imagine that I should permit them to enjoy those profits to the end of the chapter to my own palpable loss.

In this way I reconciled myself to my new proceedings, in which I embarked with a blind fatuity. My old tenants were dispossessed in all places from whence it was in my power to remove them, and new leases of their farms were signed, sealed, and delivered to the new occupiers. I undertook to pay all rates, tithes, and taxes, now in existence, or hereafter to be imposed ;—to erect whatever buildings the new tenants thought necessary for the occupation of their farms ;—to make new roads in all directions, whenever I was required so to do ; together with a few other covenants on my part of a similar nature. Covenants on their part were out of the question, and they

themselves were to be the soles judges of necessity, so far as roads and buildings were concerned.

Mr. M'Estimate assured me that these were the customary terms, and such as were indispensable to the operations of his countrymen. By his advice, I even let my deer park, and the ornamental grounds about the abbey, to be put, as he termed it, into a productive state, reserving to myself, however, some of the plantations and ornamental trees. For the latter I made an allowance, after the rate of a quarter of an acre for every tree. Nothing could be more just and reasonable!

Nothing further could be done till Michaelmas arrived, but I already felt the first half year's payment in my hand, and looked down with contempt upon the stupidity of my neighbours.

The old steward remonstrated, and shrugged up his shoulders at what he thought proper to term “mad headed work.”

“An old fool,” I then thought, “but age and bigotry!”

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CHAP. III.*MODERATION.*

**BEFORE** the auspicious Michaelmas arrived, some of my new tenants had departed this life, leaving the world and their projected improvements behind them. Some of them had contrived to obtain better situations on this side paradise, and were desirous of being released from their bargains with me. This was also the case with others, who, for reasons known only to themselves, were anxious to relinquish their undertakings.

But Mr. M'Estimate found no diffi-

culty in supplying their places. An advertisement in the London papers brought forward plenty of applicants, and I felt happy in perceiving that the English had caught the enlightened spirit of their northern countrymen. The vacancies which had occurred were chiefly filled up with natives of the south, strongly recommended by M<sup>r</sup>. Estimate as men of judgment and experience.

My affairs at Bingwood being again settled, I had leisure to turn my attention to other matters. Little difference had taken place in the mode of living, which Charles had adopted. The Scotchmen among other causes had materially diminished my means of supplying him, but some how or other, he contrived to pursue his career of extravagance. I imagine that when he failed with the Gentiles he succeeded with the Jews. At all events, I could discover little alteration in him,

but perhaps, that was occasioned by my seeing him so seldom. He did not often trouble me with his company, unless he had reason to think that I had money at command, and he was aware that I should willingly furnish him to the extent of my power.

With Lady Erpingham matters had assumed a more important aspect. Poverty was making rapid strides, in demolishing her Ladyship's comforts, for in consequence of the great increase of taxation and the advanced prices of all the necessaries of life, the Erpingham estates proved insufficient to support her establishment in its pristine grandeur and dignity. This defalcation in the ways and means was succeeded by the actual dismissal of a scullion, an under house maid, and a stable boy.

I well knew how deeply her Ladyship's pride would be hurt by this dire necessity, and therefore, consider-

ed that it would be a most favourable opportunity of inducing her for her own sake (which by the bye was the only effectual inducement), to effect upon the Erpingham estates, of which her trustees had obtained the actual possession, the same splendid improvements which I had just made upon the Bingwood property. The scruples, after complying with the terms of the settlement would be my own, and again in the humour of castle building, I calculated what an immense accession it would be to my revenue after I had again raised her establishment to the stipulated quota.

With the usual ceremonies I was favoured with an interview. I gave a succinct account of my prospects at Bingwood,—regretted the dismissal of her Ladyship's domestics—hinted at what might be done at Erpingham—and talked of several additions which the Duchess of Kennet had made to

her state equipage, all which additions had, I told her, an imposing effect.

For the first time in her life I apprehend Lady Erpingham was under the influence of pleasurable sensations. She expressed herself in a way so entirely new to me, that for a time I even doubted the evidence of my own senses, for she thanked me for my attention. Her voice and manner carried with them such a bewitching air of tender regard that I thought her at the moment a most charming woman, and seriously blamed myself for not having studied her character at a more early period of our union.

We suddenly became extremely cordial. I was invited to breakfast the following morning with her ladyship, who in return paid me a visit to my study. Miss Toadeater was, or pretended to be, in raptures. In short, there never was a more happy family.

After the happy state had continued



a few days, during which I had repeatedly brought my grand design upon the *tapis*, it was agreed that her Ladyship should spend the ensuing autumn at Bingwood. This was an honour totally unexpected, but it was not the extent of my good fortune. Her Ladyship agreed that the success of my operations at Bingwood should govern her in the management of the other property. What rendered her condescension more remarkable was her neglecting to consult the august Mr. Frill upon the business.

To avoid the possibility of forfeiting her ladyship's good opinion I took especial care to keep clear of further intercourse. Of the success at Bingwood I could not entertain the smallest doubt. All that I had to do was to prevent any thing occurring which was likely to defeat the fabric I had so happily erected.

The winter and spring, as opposed

to the preceding season, had passed in comparative quietness. It was only at times disturbed by my son and his noisy companions. But this I quietly endured, and indeed encouraged as much as possible, rather than I should be said to have driven Charles from his home. At his extravagance I did not grumble, for I plainly foresaw that it would stand me hereafter in need if I required it. Of his sister I heard but little and saw still less. She was her own mistress and seemed not to have the least inclination to submit to control, particularly the control of her parents. As to the royal Flanagan he was a complete dead letter, and was apparently forgotten by every one.

Lady Caroline Flanagan had indeed completely outlived her mother's remembrance and my liking. She might have taken a voyage to Jericho and back without raising an emotion in either of our breasts, and whatever

respect Lady Erpingham might have entertained for the ancient sovereigns of Munster, she had no great regard for the King's Bench, however royal its title. As she could not think of her daughter without coupling her with the Captain her son-in-law, she wisely contrived to forget both. I inwardly acknowledged my obligation to the Captain's creditors, for confining a person who must infallibly have become a very serious plague to me, if he could have procured his liberty.

Lady Erpingham, according to her usual custom, spent the summer months at Brighton, but about the middle of September I met her by appointment in London, for the purpose of conducting her to the shades of Bingwood, but by a series of trifling delays it was almost the middle of October, and after the operations upon the new system had commenced before we could enter upon our journey.

During our progress I seemed placed upon the tenter hooks of expectation, and was overwhelmed with anxiety to see the realization of my golden prospects. I omitted no act of attention towards Lady Erpingham—I tried to amuse her mind and to anticipate her wants, and I even went so far as to compliment Miss Toadeater upon the amiability of her looks. Charles, who accompanied us, to my great joy as well as surprize, managed to conduct himself with decency and propriety. In short, a person who had chanced to view us for the first time would have pronounced us a family of love and affection,

As we drove up to the Abbey I could not help regretting that I was not greeted as usual by my old hoary headed friends with their offspring and servants glowing with ruddy health and contentment. But the regret was chased away by the great prospect of gain.

My new tenants had entered upon their several occupations. Every thing before me presented an air of bustle and activity. The fine rich pastures were preparing to be loaded with golden crops of corn. The plough had followed the footsteps of the deer, and every part of the estate bore evident proofs that the spirit of improvement had taken root upon my property.

Having previously written to Dr. Bubbleby and the other clergymen to say that I should take upon myself the payment of the titles and thus remove the great cause of dissension between the pastor and his flock, I looked forward to the extinction of all heart-rending jealousies, and to seeing all around me joining in the commemoration of an event which should restore to the country that rural felicity to which it had been long a stranger.

When I had done the honours of the place to Lady Erpingham, and point-

ed out to her its chief beauties, I left her ladyship to enjoy them as she thought proper, while I pursued my own plans of amusement. One morning, the fourth or fifth I think of my arrival, I had indulged myself after breakfast in a pleasing reverie and was making calculations as usual upon a datum that had no foundation but in my own brain; from this state of happiness I was roused by the entrance of Dr. Bubbleby. His congratulations upon my arrival were succeeded by his entering upon the subject of my letter to him respecting the taking the tithes upon myself. He had he said obeyed my commands, which were always laws with him, and in consequence of those commands he had not interfered with any of my tenants, either new or old. His tithe day was passed and he was anxious not only to come to an arrangement for the future but also to settle present arrears.

As my rent day was approaching there would I thought be little difficulty in satisfying the claims of the Doctor.

“ I shall have, doctor, to pay you half a years income. But on recollection it is only for the future that we have to arrange; my new tenants have but just entered upon their farms.”

“ Excuse me, my Lord, a whole year became due at Michaelmas. Here is your lordship’s letter dated in February last, in which you engage to take the tithes upon yourself.”

“ But I only meant to take them from Michaelmas.”

“ I have strictly adhered to your lordship’s instructions, and have in consequence of it refrained from all interference since the date of the letter.”

“ You must surely have known, doctor, that I could not intend to pay the tithes till my new tenants entered

upon their bargains. Besides, it is still but half a year."

"I had no right, my lord, to question your lordship's conduct, it was my duty to follow your instructions."

"Well, well! the amount then I must get from the old tenants as well as I can. But it is still but half a year."

"Pardon me, my lord, the produce of that half year is very little short of the gross amount of the whole year."

"Well, doctor, reckoning your own way, for the next half year will make things equal. What do you expect to receive?"

"Three thousand pounds, my Lord!"

"Three thousand devils!"

"Pounds, my lord, and I can venture to assure your lordship, that nothing but the high veneration and respect which I bear towards my noble patron would have induced me to name



a sum so much beneath the real value. My possessions here are transient, but my duty imperatively calls upon me to protect the interest of the church. My successor shall never attach that description of blame upon me, which I have but too just reason to affix to the memory of my predecessor, worthy as I am ready to allow him to have been in other respects."

"It was always considered, doctor, that Mr. Farren received a full fair value for the living. Six hundred a year was deemed an ample compensation for his rights."

"How the conscience of Mr. Farren, my lord, could rest satisfied with his gross misconduct in neglecting the interests, the vital interest of the profession which he had thought proper to embrace, I know not. My task has been indeed a difficult one and in doing my duty I have exposed myself to a degree of odium from which I

ought to have been free. With hard strips, much litigation, and in the face of every opposition, I have managed to raise the income to nearly treble the former amount."

"And does not that satisfy you, Doctor?"

"My temporal wants, it does, my Lord, and amply too. But I am only the steward of others; nay, I am the the steward of your family. What noble patronage will they hereafter enjoy!"

"But the sum you have named, Doctor, I can never consent to pay. It is beyond the bounds of all reason."

"Your Lordship was always cheerful—always fond of lively amusement. Time has lost its power with you; and——"

"By God, Sir, I am serious."

"And so am I, my Lord. I troubled your lordship with a visit this morning, in order seriously to consider upon our

relative situation, and to offer your lordship my best advice under present circumstances. For your lordship's sake I regret that you did not ask my opinion before you consented to lease your estates free from tithes. As far as my humble experience extends, your lordship may command my services; and if I may venture to suggest the course of proceeding which seems to me most eligible for your Lordship, it is, that you agree to the proposals I have made, being satisfied that the more time I have for considering the value of the living, the greater will be my ideas of its real worth."

I instantly felt how deeply I had entangled myself. My cursed precipitancy had thrown me completely within the clutches of this wolf in sheep's clothing. If the alternative had been left to me, whether to submit to this most abominable imposition, or to send (were it in my power,) M'Estimate

and his farmers to the devil, I should have inevitably have preferred the latter. But there was no way left for me to escape. The doctor closed his part of the conference by disclaiming all idea of taking an advantage of the situation in which I had placed myself; nothing could be farther from his intention than pursuing a line of conduct, which he himself would be the first to say would be unhandsome. But this was so far from being the case, that he had, previous to my arrival at Bingwood, given notice to the different tenants, that he expected the sum of three thousand pounds would be made up among themselves.

To hold further intercourse with Dr. Bubbleby was impossible. I was completely within his power. I well knew the consequences which would arise to myself, from his unhinging all my agreements with my new tenants. In-

stead of one harpy to contend with, I should have fifty, and all of them having the example of the Doctor's rapacity before them.

To preserve myself from greater evils, I considered it most adviseable to submit to his terms, agreeing to pay him three thousand a year, for twenty-one years. I calculated that by this unexpected blow, I had lost nearly two thousand a year, but still my gains were immense.

I had no claims upon the gratitude of the Doctor. On the contrary, I must have been an object of contempt with him, on giving him the living, in preference to bestowing it upon those who were justly entitled to it. I firmly believe that the injustice I was guilty of, upon this occasion, created more real uneasiness in my breast than any other action of my life. Nothing ever brought the Doctor casually in my

mind, without his being accompanied with a train of ideas as revolting as himself. But to have him so painfully forced upon me, as had just been the case, was more than I could well bear.

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## CHAP. IV.

*A FERME ORNEE.*

**AFTER** what has been already said of both Lady Erpingham and Doctor Bubbleby, it would be doubting the reader's penetration, if I thought it necessary to inform him, that the latter became a great favourite with the former. The Doctor's emptiness endeared him to her ladyship. There was sympathy between them. Kindred souls, they found consolation in their mutual vacuity.

But the habits of the Doctor's life

had given him an important advantage over the Countess. The Doctor had been the founder of his own fortune. His intercourse with the great had ingrafted a train of maxims upon his mind, to which he successfully resorted upon all occasions. Fortune, on the other hand, had pounced upon her ladyship, a full-grown unweildy personage. The Doctor was compelled, by necessity, to think how he should get on in the world ; Lady Erpingham had no occasion to think at all ; and I will do her the justice to say, that she never trod unbidden in the regions of reflection. In character, I apprehend the Countess bore a strong similarity to many other patrons of the Doctor, (myself perhaps included,) who are incessantly in the practice of mistaking sound for sense, and subserviency for friendship.

Grandeur was now the Doctor's idol.



To have been descended from an ancient and honourable family would have been the height of his ambition, but, unfortunately, the records of his ancestors did not extend beyond the reign of King John. Peter de Bubblebee, as the name was then spelt, from whom he was lineally descended, was one of the barons who compelled that king to sign the Magna Charta. Nothing, however, could be traced of Peter's pedigree; but it was conjectured, that the family derived its origin from the union of a Roman general with the daughter of Theodorie, the Ostrogoth. Here the Doctor went rather too far; for her ladyship being totally ignorant that Theodoric was a kingly personage, the worthy Doctor reaped no advantage from his regal descent. Had he contented himself with Theodore, king of Corsica, the case would have been different, and he

would have cut out the royal Flanagan hollow.

To amalgamate his manners with those of the Countess, the Doctor had contrived to dismiss his constitutional smile; and as I have seen him walk across the lawn towards the abbey, I could only compare his empty importance to that of an elderly goose at the head of a brood of goslings. His venerable grey hairs were dismissed, and his head was now surmounted with a cauliflower wig. This last change in his appearance was occasioned by his learning that Lady Erpingham always insisted upon that dignatorial appendage being hung upon the pericranium of her domestic chaplains. The Doctor was a most regular attendant at the levees of her ladyship, but he knew sufficient of my disposition to venture the acceptance of her

invitations to the dinner table. With Miss Toadeater he was a tremendous favourite; so much so, that had Mrs. Bubbleby been dead, I should have trembled for Lady Erpingham losing her companion.

The conduct of the Doctor in regard to his tithes, had by no means shaken the favorable opinion I still entertained of my new system. I only blamed my folly in becoming a prey to extortion. I felt that I ought, by this time, to have known the Doctor better than to have left any thing to be settled at an after-date, or placed the slightest dependence either upon his principles, or upon his ideas of justice. Coming from him, the demand of three thousand pounds was moderation itself, although it was at least double the most extended value of the living. But as my rental was trebled, I could

afford to make a partial sacrifice, particularly as I conceived some punishment due to me for my precipitation.

Anxious to watch the progress of the improvements, my mornings were usually employed in rambling about the estate ; and as an excuse for penetrating in every direction, without seeming to pry into what was going forward, I usually carried a gun on my shoulder. In this way I contrived to visit all my new tenants in succession, and took them at times when not expecting my appearance, they would be off their guard, and I should see them in their native simplicity. I cannot say that the picture which my northern friends presented was by any means inviting ; for whatever might be their management without doors, there was nothing very promising within. The farm-houses, which, under my old tenants, had looked like so many

cottages of content, cleanliness, and comfort, in the course of a few weeks, had been entirely disrobed of their neatness, and now vied with the pigstyes in filth and nastiness. The children were squalid and half-naked, and I could perceive little difference in appearance between the master and his labourer. If a preference could be given to either, it was certainly to the latter, who, although he had adopted a Scotch master, had not adopted Scotch manners.

In the midst of these disagreeable and disgusting scenes, my attention was pleasingly arrested by the sight of a farm-house, fitted up, not only with peculiar neatness, but with no small portion of elegance and taste. It was on one of my best farms. The present tenant had taken it in consequence of the public advertisement. He was, I understood, a gentleman of very con-

siderable agricultural ardour, who had resided some years in the metropolis. Whether or not he had tempered his agricultural ardor with agricultural experience, I had yet to learn.

I made my way to the house, which, as the door stood open, I was about to enter without ceremony, but my hat naturally left my head when a few paces in the inside of the door, I saw a middle-aged lady, attended by two well-looking young women, whom I was not deceived in supposing to be the good lady's daughters. The whole of the groupe were dressed in the first style of fashion. Had it not been for the green fields which surrounded me, I should have fancied myself still in London.

The contrast between what I had so lately seen, and what I now witnessed, placed the latter to the best advantage. I turned my eyes right and left when

I was ushered by the dame, and followed by her daughters, into the parlour. The room appeared to be superbly fitted up. A grand pianoforte graced one side of the apartment, and an Ottoman the other. The windows had been recently levelled with the floor, and opened to a small lawn, through a veranda in the act of being painted. On the whole, I thought it to be the most elegant *ferme ornée* I had ever seen.

I could not help expressing my astonishment at the amazing alteration which had been effected in the space of a few weeks, more especially as the predecessor of the present occupier, I well recollected to have no idea of elegance and comfort beyond a well-filled belly, and a pipe of tobacco.

“ Since Michaelmas, Madam,” said I, “ you have done wonders.”

“ Lord, my Lord, why we’ve been

at it these four months. Mr. Bergamotte paid Farmer Dobbins I don't know how much, for power to make the house fit to be lived in. Lord, if your Lordship had but seen what a pigstye it was when Mr. Bergamotte and I first came to it; you'd ha' been surprized indeed how anybody could have breathed here. But won't your Lordship take a seat, and a bit o' something to eat, and a glass of Madeira, or the like o' that. As your lordship's got your gun with you, perhaps you've been out long, and a little refreshment may not be amiss."

I accepted the proffered seat, but declined the proffered refreshment; however, Miss Matilda was sent out for it, and soon returned with a sandwich equipage, perfectly corresponding with the ornaments of the room.

To have refused availing myself of this act of civility and attention, would



have been a breach of good breeding. While I was eating a sandwich, and swallowing a glass of Madeira, the lady informed me that she expected Mr. Bergamotte to return every instant. He had merely gone into the home field, and as the ground was dirty, she was sure he would not go to a distance; and she hoped I would honour them so far as to await his return, in order that he might not lose so eligible an opportunity of paying his respects to me, which, she assured me, Mr. Bergamotte was extremely desirous of doing. I should find her husband, she added, quite different from the country clowns, and I should like him she was certain.

I bowed several times during the lady's speech. At the conclusion of it, I mumbled out some expressions of pleasure at having so truly eligible a tenant on my estate, and hoped that

so spirited an example would have a due effect.

“Aye, my Lord, we’ll show the people what’s what. If they follows our example there’ll be some spirit in the country—’twill be worth living in.”

“That, Madam, I can easily conceive; what has been already done is a proof of what might be expected from persons of taste and judgment.”

A most beneficent smile played upon the countenance of Mrs. Bergamotte; and, as far as looks could convey the feelings of the mind, the lady seemed disposed to make the most ample returns for my compliments.

“Why to be sure, we made the best of what we found here;” said the lady, “but really the place is so confined, that there’s no treating our friends as they ought to be treated. If one have’s

any body to dinner, why there's no drawing-room to take off the smell of the vittals. Mr. Bergamotte means, next spring, to build a sute of apartments fitting to his sitivation. Matilda, my dear, show his lordship the surveyor's plan."

While Miss Matilda went for the plan, I looked at the mother with a little more attention than was perhaps requisite. Probably the contrast between the fashion of her dress, and the vulgarity of her tongue, led me to fix my eyes more strongly than was strictly allowable in polite life. The lady blushed, and held down her head. She appeared to have taken a lesson from Mrs. Davenport, in her personification of a love-sick old maid.

The heat of the room had overcome her, and she was under the necessity of sending Miss Sophia for her

smelling bottle, purtesting that the weather was more like July than October.

Mrs. Bergamotte might have been handsome in her time, and had certainly been accustomed to admiration. But much as old women were the rage, and highly as they were considered by the first-rate authorities of fashion, I candidly confess that I had no great inclination to lay the foundation of an intrigue in the present instance. Lady Isabella Ainsworth had, perhaps, sickened me from pursuits of that description.

The entrance of Miss Matilda with the plan relieved me from the dreaded attack, which being unexpected, I should have been at a loss to parry, without giving offence. But before the plan could undergo a discussion, a gentleman opened the door of the par-

lour, and was presented to me as Mr. Bergainotte.

If I was astonished at the appearance of the ladies, I was no less so at that of the gentleman. He bore a much nearer resemblance to a modern beau than to an English farmer. But I had long known that the world was not to be judged by appearances.

Complaints have often been made by landlords, within my hearing, of the encroachments which the new race of farmers were continually making upon the gentry ; and I had here a complete proof of it. In lieu of the homely appearance of a farm-house, with the family indulging in the luxury of a chimney-corner hung with fitches of bacon, here was a parlour richly carpeted, and crowded with furniture of the most expensive description. The several articles appeared to be equally

costly with those which, in my days of early extravagance, I had adorned the town mansion, which had once been Lord Sniperhead's.

The farmer himself was as much dressed as his wife and daughters; and, although ostensibly employed on the business of his farm, was adorned for a state drawing-room. White silk stockings, and nankeen small-clothes, notwithstanding October was completely on the wane, covered the lower man, while the middle man was covered with a puce-coloured well-brushed coat; and the upper man was surmounted by a Brutus wig, manufactured in the first style of perfection.

I cannot say that I was *quite* satisfied at seeing a tenant approaching so near to terms of equality; but I comforted myself that his evident property would secure the rent, and his taste for agri-

cultural pursuits would improve the farm. At all events, I considered that by the effect of his example, the filthy customs of my Scotch tenants might possibly be corrected.

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## CHAP. V.

### RURAL ECONOMY.'

THE elegance of Mr. Bergamotte's manners did not put his habiliments to the blush. His advances were made with the most perfect ease and *non-chalance*, as if he had been approaching an intimate friend. Indeed, his whole demeanour proved him to be thoroughly acquainted with the rules of civilized life. I could have fancied myself in Bond Street, and the person before me one of its most finished loungers. I rose up from my seat,



when the lady announced with much ceremony.

“ My Lord, Erpingham, Mr. Bergamotte—”

“ Mr. Bergamotte, my Lord Erpingham—”

“ Your Lordship,” said the gentleman, “ does my humble roof the highest honour. Truly sorry that at the present moment, we cannot receive your Lordship in a style suitable to your Lordship’s rank. But every thing must have time, my Lord; improvements are not completed in a day. Mrs. Bergamotte is impatience itself for the new saloon and drawing-room; and seems to think that all my attention should be devoted to perfecting our new residence. But I tell her I have higher duties to perform. My farm, my Lord; labourers will not do their work, unless they are properly attended to. Ploughing here, ditching there—

cows in one place, sheep in another. A life of action, my Lord, gives an appetite, and the open air stimulates exertions."

"Very true, Sir; the man of sense will always prefer the works of nature to those of art. The country is as much the region of health and content as the metropolis is of disease and misery."

"The country, my Lord, is every thing your Lordship says. There is, however, one great drawback on a country life. London is, to be sure, dirty in wet weather, but then it's soon dry again; but here one can't walk in anything like pleasure, at this time of the year, without dirtying one's shoes, and sticking in the mud. If your Lordship will believe me, this is the third pair of shoes and stockings which I have put on since breakfast, besides my morning dress; and really

these are a shame to be seen, and yet I did not go ten yards out of the regular footway. Since I have entered upon my farm, the ground has been so dirty, that I have only been able to go over it once."

As I could not compliment Mr. Bergamotte upon the management of his farm, I took hold of the only part where praise could be bestowed, without giving utterance to a palpable falsehood. I expressed myself, therefore, highly pleased with the appearance of the house, which I thought was, even at present, replete with every comfort. Mrs. Bergamotte, however, like a true farmer's wife, took to herself all the honour and credit of the domestic arrangements. She considered it to be her post to make a suitable reply.

"Dear me, my Lord," cried the dame, "if you had but a seen it before I came down. All the dirty places

within sight, as if they'd been put there on purpose to poison people. The pigstye there, where the pheasantry stands, and the cow-house, just upon the ha! ha! One could'nt look out of window without being turned quite sick."

The lady made a pause, for no other reason, than because she wanted breath to proceed. Mr. Bergamotte seized upon the vacancy, and took up the discourse.

"Farming, my Lord, is the occupation for the man of sense. There's scope for his genius—there's scope for his soul, let his soul be as comprehensive as that of the great Newton himself."

Mrs. Bergamotte had now recovered her wind, and was prepared for a fresh start. Cutting short the lecture on philosophy, which Mr. Bergamotte had just commenced, she proceeded——

"Aye, my Lord; who can withstand

the charms of a country life. Who'd be stewed up where they can't get a mouthful of fresh air for the life of them. And then the poisonous milk in London. Will your Lordship step and see *my* dairy."

Not knowing what Mrs. Bergamotte's dairy might produce, I most respectfully declined the invitation upon the plea of hurry. My time, I said, was limited ; the next time I had the pleasure of seeing her I hoped to be possessed of more leisure. I ventured to observe, however, that it was a fortunate circumstance to the world at large, that such a variety of tastes were to be found. Any place, however dissonant to the inclinations of one, would be occupied by another, whose ideas and feelings were of a different description.

"But a town life, my Lord," continued Mrs. Bergamotte, "can only

be tolerated by those who have never been so fortunate as to taste the charms of the country. How delightful to the cultivated understanding to watch the seasons as they pass. To see the growing spring, bursting, as Pope says, into birth, followed by the ripening summer. And then to see the summer succeeded by the golden autumn. To receive, as we have just been doing, the richest gifts from the bounteous and beneficent hand of nature. Did you ever read St. Pierre, my Lord?"

I was planet struck. But as it was necessary that I should answer the lady's question, after some little hesitation, which I intended should be taken for a reflective pause to consider whether I had read the works of the author in question or not, I replied in the negative. This was strictly true, for being ignorant even of his name, it

was not likely that I should have perused his book.

“ Charming author, my Lord ; we’ll send it to the abbey this afternoon. Your Lordship will be delighted with him. But as I was saying of Nature, and now when she has emptied her store, and when, as the poet says,

“ The western sun withdraws the shortened day ;  
And humid evening, gliding o’er the sky  
In her chill progress, to the ground condensed  
The vapours throws.”

Perfectly satisfied with Mrs. Bergamotte’s account of the operations of Nature, I addressed myself to her husband the first moment I could decently detach my attention from her mellifluous language. I observed to Mr. Bergamotte that I thought his dress, convenient as it certainly was, rather too slight for the season his good lady

had just been describing, and not only for that, but for his occupation likewise.

“ See the hardy village swain,” said the white silk stocking farmer, “ view those sinews, which the open air has so strongly knitted, and let those blush for their folly who pay regard to atmospheric changes.”

I began to doubt whether I was wandering in the regions of philosophy or rambling in the wilds of Parnassus. I was certainly not in an English farmhouse. Mr. Bergamotte continued,

“ It is astonishing, my lord, in a free country like our own, where every branch of science is so laboriously cultivated, and so eagerly pursued, that agriculture, the noblest of all,—the true and only source of our wealth, let our politicians say what they will, —the very ground-work of our existence, should be so dreadfully neglect-



ed. Look to the able writings of that most transcendant genius Mr. Old. See to what perfection agriculture may be brought. A hundred thousand pounds to be made in twenty years out of a mere trifle, only by improving land that's good for nothing. See my Lord.—Liming so much—Turnips yield so much. There's the sum total, and I defy any man to say that there is an incorrect figure from the beginning to the end of the calculation.”

“ But pray, Mr. Bergamotte, will you allow me to ask if the datum upon which those calculations are founded, are as correctly formed as the calculations themselves ?”

“ Most assuredly, my Lord, nothing can possibly be clearer. It is as self-evident as that black is black, and white, white. It would be a downright insult upon a man of Mr. Old's eminence in every thing that relates to

the rural economy of the country, to suppose for an instant that he could be mistaken in any of his propositions. Besides there is the never-enough-to-be-praised works of Mr. M'Estimate. Here my Lord——”

Mr. Bergamotte paused for an instant while he stepped across the room to a small book-case, and took down a book most superbly bound in green morocco. Laying open a coloured engraving upon the table, he went on,

——“ Here, my Lord, is where-withal to enlarge the ideas. Cast your eyes to this view of the farm-yard from the house. Here's the house from the farm-yard. And then here's the farm-yard again from the hill. And see, my Lord, here's the plan of the farm-yard itself. Finest thing in the world. Every thing complete. Threshing mills worked by water, when there's

any water to work them. And all the out-buildings in papers ——.”

Mrs. Bergamotte pulled her husband by the tail of his coat, and regarded him with a severe frown.

“ —— I mean pasteboard, my Lord. Finest covering in the world. Economical to a degree. Save a thousand pounds in no time. Nothing, my Lord, like economy. I gave this morning five hundred and thirty-three pounds, seventeen shillings for a Merino ram. That's farming with spirit, my Lord. You will see nothing grovelling, mean, or contracted in my system.”

I declared myself highly pleased at my good fortune in having a tenant of such a comprehensive turn. Then declining to partake of a fresh set of refreshments with which the table had been completely loaded by the young ladies during the conversation, I rose and took my leave.

I hardly knew what conclusion to draw from the strange jumble I had heard, but I thought that an exhibition of so gentlemanly a tenant, would have a good effect upon Lady Erpingham; and perhaps induce her at once to agree to my commencing similar proceedings on the Erpingham property. I could not for a moment doubt, that Mr. Bergamotte's quackery far out-weighed his science, but Lady Erpingham was not capable of detecting his ignorance, and as his appearance was in his favour, a sight of him was calculated to make a favourable impression.

I therefore made up my mind to invite him to the abbey. It was a compliment, which I considered to be due to a personage of his respectability, and as he was of a description wholly different from the rest of the tenants, the invitation was not likely to create

any unpleasant jealousy with the other farmers.

I was perfectly aware that Lady Erpingham would think herself insulted by my proposing to admit any tenant to my table, let his respectability be what it would, but I led myself to believe that his manners would lift him above any such suspicion. But when he had taken his departure, and had impressed her Ladyship with favourable ideas of him, which I did not entertain the slightest doubt would be the case, I could then more forcibly point out the vast superiority of my new system, producing Mr. Bergamotte as a case in point, and shewing that one of the effects of the improvement would be, that a farmer in future would become an ornament to a drawing-room, instead of being a disgrace to the worst sitting room in the house. It struck me that although Mr. Berga-

motte made more noise, he was in reality as empty as her Ladyship, and as her Ladyship was wholly ignorant of every branch of every subject in general, and of agriculture in particular, the bombastic nonsense to which I foresaw Mr. Bergamotte would give utterance, would pass for sterling sense and sound experience.

On my return to the abbey, I found Lady Erpingham on the point of taking her morning airing. She was viewing the horses with peculiar satisfaction, and observed that for the first time for several months they looked as they ought to do. I handed her Ladyship and Miss Toadeater into the carriage, and making them a most profound bow, I went into the house, where I soon discovered the cause of her Ladyship's agreeable looks. Her establishment, as far the stable went, was again complete, a stable boy having been

hired that very morning. It must be allowed that her Ladyship's eye sight was remarkable keen to perceive a difference in her horses, of which no one else could possibly be aware. On that account it might be imagined that I ran a great hazard in exposing Mr. Bergamotte to her Ladyship's penetration.

But I was not dismayed, and considered the accession of the stable boy a most fortunate circumstance, in as much as it had promoted her Ladyship's good humour. To mend the matter there was still the scullion, and under house maid, as *corps de reserve* in case the stable boy should fail before my ends had been accomplished.

That I might not lose the advantages of the present happy conjuncture, I immediately dispatched a servant with a note to Mr. Bergamotte, requesting the *honour* of his company

to dinner. That done, I went to my study, and entered into a series of calculations upon the additional income which the Erpingham estates would unquestionably afford me. I looked upon the affair as certain, not entertaining the slightest idea of disappointment.





## CHAP. VI.

*A NEW SYSTEM.*

I HAD not arrived at the full extent of my anticipations, when I was interrupted by the entrance of a servant, who informed me that one of my old tenants that had been recently turned out of his farm, was desirous of seeing me. As I had shown that confidence in such as had left their homes, as not to require the payment of the rent before the usual time, I supposed that one of them had conscientiously sought me for the purpose of clearing

up his arrears, which according to the system I had pursued from the time of my first coming into possession of the estates, of leaving half a year on hand, amounted to a year's rent.

A grey headed venerable patriarch entered the room. He seemed care worn and desponding. Age, I always understood, to be attended with at least one good effect, namely, that of deadening the feelings against the miseries of life, and thus taking off the keen edge of sorrow. In this instance it appeared to have failed. I looked towards him, and drew an involuntary sigh, when I perceived that a tear was trickling down his furrowed cheek. His feelings were not of the melting order, which made the strong expression of grief that marked his countenance the more strikingly forcible. Some faces seemed to be formed for the purpose of conveying to the be-

holders an idea of unhappiness, but this was not one of them ; the lines were harsh, and did not appear likely to yield their stubborn tension to a slight cause.

After I had looked at him for some few moments, I requested to know what was the occasion of my then seeing him. He was silent, but the convulsion of the muscles of his face plainly showed, that his inward agitation was too powerful to suffer him to give utterance to the feelings which oppressed him. At last his efforts to speak were successful.

“ My Lord.” said he, “ I have paid rent to your, and you family for forty years. My father, and his father before him were born upon your estate, and toiled there from their boyhood till nature compelled them to desist.”

“ Well, my good friend, and what of that? Your case is not by any means

singular. Situations have frequently descended from father to son, till an idea of right is acquired. There have been many cases of this description, some within my own knowledge, and others that I consider equally indubitable, where a long continued occupation has disabled the tenant from duly appreciating its value. Of what do you complain?

“Of ruin! I have worked hard—I have paid every man his due—I have brought up a numerous family, and I am bold to say that I have claims upon your Lordship.”

“Claims! What claims can you possibly have upon me? On the contrary, if claims do exist on either side, they are most assuredly on mine. I am not aware of the particular farm you occupied. You say that you have enjoyed it for forty years, consequently for that long period you have been

in the possession of important advantages. Your rent has been immoderately low, and if you have not made a proper use of your good fortune, it is your fault and not mine. You refused like the rest of those who, bigotted to their former prejudices, refused to adopt plans which must infallibly have been equally beneficial both to you and myself. The rent which you paid bore no proportion to what is now given, and which surely you, who were acquainted with the soil, could have afforded better than any other person. It is the narrowness of your ideas that has driven you from a situation. I am sorry for you, and indeed, should feel regret that the folly of any individual, whether I had ever been connected with him or not, should place him in a similar condition. You doubtless thought that you were acting for

the best, and therefore quitted your farm——”

“To make room for a London barber!”

“Of whom are you speaking?”

“Of Bergamotte, my successor.”

“Did *you* occupy his farm?”

As I asked the last question my blood rushed up in my face. The abrupt entry of the barber into the train of my ideas, set them all in confusion. Although I only half listened to the farmer, I can pretty well remember that he went on nearly as follows, delivering his words in a decided, manly, tone.

“On that farm, I became the prey of your former steward. I had given him some trifling cause for taking offence, and he never forgave me. He declared, indeed, that he would be my ruin, and though that was not completed in his time, he too surely laid

the foundation. My rent was continually raised, while the rest of the farms were not touched, and every means was used to distress me. I often tried to complain to your Lordship, but you would listen to nothing. But this is not all. My misery was not yet sufficient. My son, the staff of my age, and now the chief support of my existence. My son, on whose labour I can alone depend, has fallen a sacrifice to ——.”

“ —— A London barber,” said I to myself aloud, “ Heavens, what can I say to Lady Erpingham, if ever she discovers it.”

“ Tell her,” continued he, “ how her son has injured the innocent, tell her——”

“ Of whom are you speaking, my good friend?” said I, half recollecting myself.

“Of Lady Erpingham. Of the mother of your son.”

The barber had taken such a firm possession of my mind, that I could hear no farther. I dreaded that all my well arranged plans with Lady Erpingham would be entirely defeated, and that this cursed barber would spoil every thing. It would be no service to forbid his coming, as independent of such a course being degrading to me as a gentleman, the discovery of the barber tenant would, I fear, make its way to Lady Erpingham by some means or other. So that at any rate I was apprehensive that this hero of powder and pomatum would mar my projects.

It was useless my talking to the old man, when I was wholly incapable of listening to what he was saying. I desired him to call to-morrow, when I would hear what grievances he had



to allege, but that he must excuse me now.

“ To-morrow, my Lord, will be too late. It must be now.”

“ *Must* be now,” said I, as my passion rose. “ *Must* be now,” I repeated as I rung the bell. A servant entered, and I ordered him to show the old man to the door.

The old man cast upon me a look of anger mingled with contempt, and then left the room, hoping that my cruelty would be properly recompensed either in this world, or in the next ; *an* that *my* son would be as great a curse to me, as his had been, as yet, a blessing to him.

Happy is he, who has no stings upon his conscience, and no regrets for having left undone those things which he ought to have done. But in what street does such a man live? In all the virtues and vices there is, however,

a graduated scale by which a man is apt to measure his own actions, and to regulate his own passions. Acuteness of feelings must in all cases be regulated by the quantum of sensibility, and here no one can estimate what that quantum is in another, nor can he exactly judge of what portion he himself is in possession. That I did not listen to the old man I have sincerely lamented, whenever the subject has come across my mind, but I will not vouch that it made so much impression upon me, as it might upon many others whose virtues and vices were upon a par with mine. Whether it was the effect of disappointment, or whether it was the result of natural morbidity, I will not pretend to determine, but the fact was, that I led myself to consider all past mishaps as irremediable, and discarded them as soon as possible from my thoughts.

I could have wished this affair to have been otherwise. I learnt when it was too late, that the old man's son had offended Lord Winterbourne, by declining to part with a favourite dog. Charles was bent upon having the dog, and was not nice in his means of obtaining it. In revenge for the refusal, and to obtain that possession, the monster, for such in this case I must call him, had suborned some of his servants, and had procured the poor youth to be seized under a warrant, on the very day in which the old man made his appeal to my justice. Upon oath he was committed for poaching, and left to his choice of imprisonment or of entering into a condemned regiment. I affected to believe that the farmer's son was guilty, but circumstances too plainly proved him to be innocent. He chose the imprisonment, and became an inmate

of the county gaol, the companion of felons and of some of the vilest characters which the kingdom could produce.

To have endeavoured to have repaired the injustice when it had been once committed, would not only oblige me to acknowledge myself in the wrong, but would have dreadfully exposed the character of Charles. Bad as I felt it to be, I was by no means anxious that all the world should entertain the same opinion of him with myself. But I looked with horror at the monster I was called upon to own as a son.

The poor farmer's son had borne an excellent character previous to his committal ; but habits contracted in the gaol soon dissipated his good qualities, and reduced him in reality to the state of moral degradation of which he had been suspected ; thus giving a colour to the first accusation.

On his discharge from confinement, without friends or character, and without the means of earning a livelihood, the poor youth was compelled to adopt that course of life for which he had been unjustly punished. Driven to desperation, he closed a short career of infamy by the murder of a game-keeper, for which he and his associates were executed. The blood of this unhappy youth, I sometimes feel, *maugre* my general insensibility, will one day be required at my hands.

Shocked at the close of this tragedy, I endeavoured to impress upon the mind of Charles the consequences of what I termed his depravity. But my efforts were unavailing, his heart was callous, and he treated the whole business with a horrible levity, turning away from me and saying the fellow *was* born for a gallows or he would never have been hung.

But the barber was uppermost in my mind, and I must own that my pride was almost as much hurt at receiving my new associate at my table as I expected Lady Erpingham would be in case accident should make known to her ladyship his real quality. But as it would have been highly indecent to revoke the invitation, I therefore determined to await the chances and take the consequences of the exposure. My courage failed me every five minutes, and it was with some difficulty that I screwed it up to the "sticking place" as the time of dinner drew near. I knew that the Marchioness of Haughtiford, Lady Erpingham's first cousin by the mother's side, notwithstanding she was almost as much encumbered with pride as the Countess, had entertained the Marquis's tailor at their magnificent country seat for a whole month, during

which Snip was noble in every thing but title. But then the Marquis was a little out at elbows and a great deal in Snip's debt. So much so, that without the invitation, the Marchioness would not have been enabled to have procured her state liveries for the ensuing winter campaign. But then again the Marchioness had none of the blood of the Vavasours in her veins.

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## CHAP. VII.

### *EASE AND ELEGANCE.*

WHILE I was ruminating upon the approaching dinner, an event occurred which was as unexpected as it was unpleasant. This was no other than the sudden entrance of my son-in-law Captain Flanagan. The Captain, presuming I suppose on his relationship, had saved the servants the trouble of announcing him, and burst upon me in all his native dignity, unlooked for and unwelcome. For a time he divided my attention with the *friseur*, and



had it been in my power to have got rid of one only, I should have been most undoubtedly at a loss to which the preference of ejection would have been given.

The worthy Captain had contrived to enter into a composition with his creditors, by which, for the present, he had obtained his liberty. By continual appeals to the good sense of those to whom he was indebted, he had prevailed upon them to agree with him in opinion, that so long as they thought proper to keep him in confinement he could do nothing towards the extinction of his obligations. But if his person was free from molestation he should be enabled to gain possession of his wife's person ; her fortune would then follow as a matter of course, and could be appropriated to the use of his friends. Besides, if he should fail with his wife, there was a

chance of getting something out of me, seeing that my pride would oblige me to establish him as a gentleman.

I received this descendant of the ancient kings of Munster with the best grace I could assume. He seated himself without ceremony in a chair directly opposite to that in which I was placed, and then told me that he was come all this way to seek out his baggage of a wife, that had so undutifully suffered him to be cooped up so long, without coming near him at all at all, or sending him so much as a single thirteener, which, knowing how dearly he loved her, and seeing that he had no money to help himself, was a wicked thing. Here, he had married the baggage when he could have had Mrs. Graves, the tallow-chandler's widow, who loved him as never was the like, and had moreover five thousand pounds to her fortune, besides a

well established shop and a roaring trade in Tooley-street. And after all to lose his hopes of preferment and to be tied up for life, for what chance could he have seeing that if any thing could have broken his wife's heart, it must have been broke long ago at the condition he had been in.

I declared my total ignorance of Lady Caroline Flanagan. With her proceedings I said I was wholly unacquainted, nor had I either seen or heard from her for a considerable time. She was now her own mistress, and I did not conceive myself entitled to interfere in the arrangements she thought proper to make for himself.

The Captain then requested to know where she was seen last, declaring his intention of following her to the end of the world, and beyond that.

: I should have cared little where he

went so I had fairly got rid of him. His enquiries after his wife were succeeded by several questions relative to her fortune. I told him that I had no further information to give him upon that subject, beyond what he had already been made acquainted with at the time of his marriage. The money which I had been enabled to settle upon her, as he well knew, had been properly secured to her own exclusive use. She could now have no further claims upon me, neither did I think myself bound, as she had pleased herself in the choice of a husband, and had not thought it necessary to consult either her mother or myself upon such an important step, to interest myself more in her concerns.

The valiant son of Erin blustered and swore. I was the father of his honey, he said, or by Jasus I should know who he was and what he was made of. He despised her dirty fortune and her

mean connections, that did not know how to behave themselves to a real gentleman born. But that was no wonder seeing that they had no more gentility about them than would stay in an empty snuff-box, nor no more bowels of compassion than was to be found in a wig block.

He gave some further account of his wife's family, which I regret has escaped my memory, as the recital of it would have been a most decisive proof of my strict impartiality in telling my story. He concluded with begging the loan of ten guineas to enable him to pursue the hussy and bring her to reason.

A demand of that very moderate nature, notwithstanding it was made at the fag end of a speech by no means complimentary, I could not refuse, particularly as he had immediately before expressed his determination of not

sleeping in a bed till he had found his rib.

He accompanied the last mentioned determination with so vehement an oath, that I really believed him to be in earnest, and under the impression that there was a probability almost amounting to certainty of getting rid of him so easily, I requested him to stay till the dinner hour when I would lead him to Lady Erpingham. I had a double motive for doing this, for I was in hopes that his royal blood would counterbalance the low origin of the barber, besides diverting her ladyship's attention from her other guest.

Soon after the ringing of the first bell I conducted the Captain, who had previously adorned his person as far as my wardrobe would allow him, to the drawing room. In a short time Lady Erpingham made her appearance. She received her son-in-law with her cus-

tomary composure, in return for which he paid his compliments to her ladyship and Miss Toadeater with his usual grace.

The privilege of paying compliments to women is an Irishman's birth right. It is seldom that he lets an opportunity pass of saying that which he well knows will gratify the "dear creatures." The son of Erin seems to consider that speaking a compliment is talking of love, and perhaps agrees with the Frenchman that talking of it is making it. At all events, had the Captain been a bachelor and Lady Erpingham a well furnished dowager, the former could not have displayed greater ardour in expressing his admiration of her ladyship's looks, which he was pleased to say, were charming as spring and glowing as summer. At the last word he hesitated.—Autumn I imagine, was at his tongue's end, but

the Captain judged rightly that Autumn would have conveyed a meaning, the least palatable of all, to every female who has arrived at what the law determines to be years of discretion.

His next adorations were on the point of being paid at the shrine of Miss Toadeater, when the announcement of Mr. Bergamotte saved him the trouble, for on the entrance of that gentleman every eye was directed towards him, to the total exclusion of every other object. This, by the bye, was not much to be wondered at, for the gentleman's figure and dress was by no means of a common description. He was bedizened from head to foot in the first style of fashionable elegance. Like an amateur of celebrity or rather notoriety, he had adorned his person with paste shoe-buckles, knee-buckles, and breast pin. His brutus wig was exchanged for a powdered peruke, and he was



altogether, as far as studied ornament could make him, a most superb figure.

I had requested permission to introduce a gentleman to the dinner table, who, although he had turned his attention to practical agriculture, had no one idea in common with a farmer. In this I chanced to be perfectly right. I had described him as a gentleman, but Lady Erpingham, who, I suppose, expected only to see a gentleman, and not a nobleman in his court dress, (for his coat was lined with white silk) regarded him with the same look which she had hitherto confined to nobility.

The fellow advanced to pay his respects with no small portion of easy assurance. I trembled when I saw him after making a circular bow, take a seat by the side of Miss Toadeater. But he had been so long in the habits of intimacy with nobility, that he had contrived to banish every species of re-

straint. Indeed his manners appeared to sit so easily upon him, that I began to doubt whether it was the barber that had been instrumental in forming the nobleman, or the nobleman the barber.

Mr. Bergamotte soon found himself completely at home, for Miss Toadeater having casually mentioned the breaking of her scent bottle, he entered into a long and learned dissertation upon perfumes in general. It was wonderful, he said, that in a country like our own, where nature had been so bountiful, her precious gifts should be so shamefully neglected. But it was never too late to effect improvements. The world would soon be enlightened. For his own part he intended to manufacture all his own perfumes, and for that purpose had made up his mind to plant this autumn twenty acres with

rose trees, and as many with lavender.

Miss Toadeater requested to be informed whether he intended the whole of that quantity, which she supposed from his manner of speaking to be pretty considerable, for his own use.

“By no means, my dear madam, I am always at the service of my friends, among whom I have the honour of reckoning persons of the very first consequence in the country.”

Lady Erpingham expressed her surprise that she never had the honour of meeting him before, and hoped that if accident should call him to London in the course of the next winter she should have the pleasure of seeing him at Erpingham house.

“I shall be proud of the honour of serving your ladyship, and shall not now be backward in proving the high sense I entertain of your ladyship’s

condescension and kindness. Your Ladyship's orders shall be most punctually attended to. That I have never before had the felicity of receiving your ladyship's commands is a misfortune I have always deeply lamented. But your ladyship, unfortunately, was already engaged during my residence in the metropolis, and among such of us as consider ourselves of importance, we make it a point never to interfere with each other."

I remembered that Mrs. Bergamotte pulled her husband's coat on his mentioning his intention of putting his roofs in papers, and secretly wished that I had included her in the invitation, for I was thoroughly satisfied as things stood that he would infallibly discover the barber before the dinner was half over, if he did not do it before it was fairly commenced.

Her ladyship looked surprised at the

strange speech which the barber had just uttered, but as external objects made but little impression upon her mind, and as she was incapable of embracing two objects at once, she completely forgot its absurdity on the announcement of the dinner having been served.

With the most invincible assurance the barber started from his seat, and with a smirking air advanced towards Lady Erpingham requesting the honour of her ladyship's hand. Her ladyship, with a most condescending smile granted the honour which the barber asked, while Captain Flanagan, whom the barber's loquacity had hitherto kept in the back ground, performed the same office to Miss Toadeater.

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CHAP. VIII.*IMPUDENCE.*

**ALTHOUGH** the barber had seized the post of honour in the drawing room, by taking upon himself the office of Lady Erpingham's conductor, she was too great an admirer of the laws of precedence to permit him to usurp the priority at the dinner-table, over the descendant of royalty. Her ladyship hastily stalked to the place at the head of the table, and instantly called upon the son of Mars to occupy the chair upon her right hand. As Miss Toad-

eater supported her ladyship on the left, Mr. Bergamotte was consigned to a seat between the companion and myself.

The vacant cover immediately opposite the barber, was reserved for my son. As Charles seldom missed the only meal at which all the family assembled, without having informed me of the cause of his absence, I enquired of the servants the reason of his non-appearance. He had not been seen since the early part of the day; and one of the footmen told me, that he had heard Charles's groom say, that his young lord was first of all going upon some justicing business, of the nature of which the reader is already acquainted. From thence he was to proceed to ———, where he had engaged to fight his bull-dog against a butcher's mastiff for five guineas, play or pay.

Hurt as I had always been at the lowness of his propensities, I now gave him up as incorrigible. But the recital of the son's exploits made not the slightest impression on his insensible mother. To his state of degradation she was perfectly indifferent ; and I am satisfied it would have been of as little consequence to her, whether the heir of the family, and the descendant of the Vavasours, had been the first gentleman, or the lowest blackguard in the land, so long as her own establishment had remained untouched.

The dinner was proceeding with tolerable quietness ; probably with much greater order and regularity than if Charles had been present. For a time stillness prevailed. No subject was started that could afford a field for the barber's eloquence, which I was now satisfied would be mute upon every point not connected with his



London shop, or his new country occupation. One reason for Mr. Bergamotte's silence might be, his attentive observation of the company present, in order to shape his manners accordingly. But a sense of decorum formed no restraint upon Flanagan, who devoured every thing before him with a voracity, which clearly proved that the emptiness of his stomach had not in the least impaired his appetite.

Lady Erpingham had always professed to consider conversation at the dinner-table as a proof of ill breeding, and Miss Toad eater, who in her behaviour was her ladyship's polygraph, was equally unobtrusive by any display of her vocabulary powers, until she chanced to make an unlucky complaint of the sweet-oil being rank.

This opened the barber's mouth—"The tricks of the oil-merchants abroad," he said, "were astonishing;

far beyond what a person, who did not know them, could possibly have supposed. In all my preparations, I take all possible pains to procure genuine oils; and yet, with all my penetration and discernment, the fruit of five-and-twenty years incessant study and laborious practice, I have been often deceived. In consequence of falling under the displeasure of a noble duke, about ten years ago, for sending him an article which he positively declared to be adulterated, I imported a considerable quantity on my own account; and once thought of undertaking a journey to Italy, for the purpose of establishing a connexion that could be thoroughly depended upon."

"Pray, Sir," said Miss Toadeater, who had observed upon the countenance of Lady Erpingham a look of surprize, mingled with curiosity, which she considered a sufficient authority to trans-

gress against the established silence—

“ Pray, Sir, are you so very great a consumer of oils ?”

“ I flatter myself, Madam, that no person in my line——”

“ Is it possible, Sir,” said Miss Toadeater, judging that Mr. Bergamotte was a farmer, and anxious to show her knowledge of the subject, “ that such an expensive thing can answer as a manure ?”

Lady Erpingham’s forehead was screwed into a forbidding frown. The companion was tongue-tied ; but the barber was not so easily baulked.

“ Oh no, Ma’am ! there is only one way in which sweet oil can be properly applied. I was merely observing, that few used more than myself ; and yet I have received so many complaints, and so many people have expressed themselves disappointed in their expectations, that I have been quite out of

heart; and I know that several, for want of the real genuine article, have resorted to the use of the Russia and Macassar oils, which were no better, and if any thing worse, than the refuse of an oil shop."

"Why that's the oil," said the Captain, "that makes the hair stick to the head, and keeps it black."

The barber, with a look of contempt, was preparing to refute the Captain's assertions, when he was stopped by the sudden entrance of my son, in a state of disgusting intoxication. Charles could with difficulty support himself, while, with the assistance of the chairs, and the occasional aid of the footmen's arms, he staggered to his accustomed seat, which was opposite to that in which Bergamotte was placed.

The redoubtable barber rose from his chair, and made Charles a profound bow. Charles looked at him for a few seconds, with a vacant stare,

and then reached his hand across the table, with——

“D—n me, if this is not a high thing. How are you Bergy, my boy? Give us a shake of your fist, my hearty. Get my hair cut in style now—nobody here knows how to snip. But what to h—ll are you doing here, Bergy? Come down to shave dad, or make a new wig for mam, hey, Bergy? D—n me, this is something like enjoyment. No dining upon starch, and wearing a buckram shirt—all free and easy as it should be. Stay where you are, my lad. I’ll just step out of the room a moment. There’s a choice spirit without—I’ll bring him in, and we’ll have a jolly night of it.”

Charles went out of the room pretty much in the same manner that he had entered it. When his back was turned, Lady Erpingham cast one of her stately looks to the lower end of the table, which absolutely petrified me. My

eyes dropped upon my plate, and I was visited by the same feelings which I apprehend a man would naturally labour under, when momentarily expecting the awful sentence of condemnation from the mouth of an inexorable judge.

The absence of Charles was of no long continuance. He speedily returned, accompanied by a greasy fellow, in a butcher's working-dress, whom he lugged in by the collar of his coat.

"Here, my lady," said he, "this is what may be called a proper genius. He's got something for a man to be proud of. His Marrowbone has beat my Trencher hollow; and I'll be cursed if he is not the finest dog in the kingdom. I would have backed Trencher against the field before; but, hang him, he had no chance with Marrowbone. Come, Calfskin, take your chair.

I told you that you should have the best the house afforded. Can't say though that we've much beauty to boast of in the parlour; (looking towards his mother, and her companion,) but there's some rare bouncing wenches in the kitchen, and we can come at them by and bye. And now here's a hundred for Marrowbone, which dad shall pay you down. I'd rather have Marrowbone than the finest race-horse in the world. I'll lay an even fifty he'll pin a bull with one of his fore-legs cut off."

"Pray, my lord," said the butcher, "let me go." "Indeed," said the fellow, looking most piteously towards me, "indeed, my lord, it is not my fault; I would not have intruded so for the world."

"Sit down, you snivelling puppy--don't you see we're all at home. Here bring him a bumper of brandy, to give

him some pluck. D—n him, he's as down in the mouth as if Marrowbone had been only second best. Drink it, you turnip, or, by the powers, I'll send your teeth down your throat upon the quick march."

The butcher swallowed the brandy. Charles then called for another chair to be placed by the side of himself, on which he forced Mr. Calfskin to sit down, to the evident confusion of the knight of the cleaver, who cast up his eyes to heaven in search of that relief, which there appeared no likelihood of his obtaining upon earth; for Charles still kept a firm possession of his prisoner, and did not show the smallest inclination to release him from his grasp.

While this distressing and almost distracting scene was going forwards, my eyes unconsciously wandered in search of something that would yield



me consolation; taking care, however, not to direct themselves towards Lady Erpingham, till every other prospect had failed. Miss Toadeater was fixed and motionless, her eyes stedfastly cast upon vacuity; her features ready to obey the signal of her superior, either to smile or to be indignant. Captain Flanagan had dropped his lower jaw, and stared with wild astonishment; but his eyes plainly showed his inclination to join in the fun, if he dared. As to Bergamotte, his features were as stationary as those of Miss Toadeater, and betrayed as much surprize as those of the noble Captain; but he differed from both, in being apparently glued to the back of the chair, and in having his mouth extended from ear to ear, in a settled but unmeaning grin.

At last, I fearfully cast my orbs of vision,—this term I make use of, not from any poetical ideas, but simply be-

cause I have been under the necessity of so often pressing "eyes" into my service, within the last half hour;—I cast my orbs of vision, then, towards Lady Erpingham, and plainly perceived that her breast was swelling with indignation.

I was no less angry than her ladyship, although my vexation arose from a different source, for I saw that my plans would be effectually destroyed. It was my duty, as the *ostensible* head of my family, to resent such a course of proceedings on the part of my son; and I sternly asked him how he dared to insult his mother and myself, by such outrageous conduct. I further insisted upon his immediately retiring, until his brain was freed from the fumes of the liquor he had been so disgracefully drinking, and which had reduced him to the lowest state of degradation.

I was as bitter as possible in my expressions to Charles, from the faint hope that I might re-establish matters with Lady Erpingham. But my exhortation had no other effect than that of rendering bad worse.

“Insult, my Lord,” said Charles, starting from his chair, but without releasing the butcher—“if there is any insult in the case, it is on your part. On this occasion I seem to know better than your lordship, what is due to the united blood of the Vavasours and the Erpinghams. I only want to assort the company. If you expect me to sit down to dinner with my own barber, you cannot grumble at sitting down with your own butcher. Stand up for yourself, Calfskin. D——mme, if you a’nt as good, at any rate, as that pot of pomatum over the way.”

This was too much ; and the worst part of the business was, that the ob-

servation of Charles, as to mutual respectability, was founded in truth. Lady Erpingham had now just reason to be offended with both Charles and me; and if either of us was excusable, it certainly was not myself. Nothing, I was satisfied, would induce her ladyship to believe that it was not a premeditated insult on my part.

The Countess, at the first mention of the barber, had majestically risen from her seat, and marched towards the door. Miss Toadeater followed her example, and they both made their exit.

I went out after them, with the vain endeavour of pacifying her ladyship, and of protesting to her, that I was wholly unacquainted with the rank of the person whom I had ventured to bring to her table. I overtook her as she was about to enter her dressing-room which was always sacred from my un-

hallowed intrusion; but I could get nothing from her but a look of ineffable contempt, and the words, "This is your gentleman farmer. I give you joy, my lord, of your new system."

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**CHAP. IX.***CONVIVIALITY.*

IN despair, I returned to the dining-parlour, with the intention of closing this disgraceful scene of riot and confusion. But it required a stronger hand than mine to accomplish the task. I had not been out of the room more than ten minutes ; in that short time, however, Captain Flanagan had forgotten his royalty, the barber his gentility, the butcher his vulgarity, and my son—himself. A perfect amalgamation seemed to have suddenly taken

place of their respective powers, which tended to unite them in one social bond of conviviality. I left them in a state of seeming consternation, and prepared to be frightened at their own shadows; when I came back, I found that every particle of *mauvaise honte* had entirely vanished, to make way for good fellowship.

The dissertations upon bull-baiting and dog-fighting were elaborately entered into by Charles and the butcher, to the great delight of the Captain. The same amusements, which formed the delight of my son and his friend, were also congenial to the temperament of the Irishman. Whenever the proprietors of either Marrowbone or Trencher made an end of a tale, Flanagan had one ready to keep up the discourse. As to the barber, the subjects under discussion, as they were amusements perfectly consonant to the

new life he had adopted, the recital of a series of redoubtal combats, together with a detail of the merits of the respective dogs, as well those who had fought and vanquished, as those whose want of strength and valour had exposed them to be beaten, appeared to give him the highest satisfaction; although his previous ignorance did not enable him to mingle in the discourse, the greatest part of which must have been far above his comprehension. But he made all the amends in his power; and while he listened to the several narratives, gazed upon the orator for the time being, with a stupid stare of admiration and astonishment.

Had my mind been at ease, and had I been in almost any other circumstances than those in which I was actually placed, I should have enjoyed the scene before me, and entered into



the spirit of it. But in looking forward to the ruin it seemed likely to bring upon me, I could not view it with common patience. To melt butter in a cabbage net, which was a definition I once heard of nonsense, would not have been more difficult than to reason efficaciously with drunken men. I endeavoured to apply a few persuasions, but they were of no use. Correctives would only have irritated. Seeing that nothing could be done in restoring order, I wisely left disorder to work itself out.

I have frequently smiled when the recollection of the scene has come across my mind, and have regretted that my agitation deprived me of the power of impressing it more strongly upon my memory. An observer of nature, if he has no objection to view her in her homeliest garb, would have derived a considerable portion of

amusement from being a spectator of this strange assemblage; for, however propriety of behaviour, and a nice attention to the laws of good breeding may have been monopolized by the higher ranks of society, wit certainly prefers to exercise her playful talents among those less favoured by birth and fortune.

Angry as I was, it was with the utmost difficulty that I repressed a smile at what was passing before me. My son seemed to possess the art of uniting the most opposite characters, and had, in this instance, completely succeeded in forming a happy party out of the most discordant materials. I remained a spectator as long as I decently could; but a sense of what was due to my own character and dignity, compelled me to retreat, and I left the quartetto in the full possession of their glee and of the dining-

room. In about two hours the whole party were conveyed to bed in a state of insensibility.

I well knew the effect which this unhappy business would have upon Lady Erpingham; and I despaired entirely of repossessing her with confidence in my improvements. I retired to rest in a state of considerable uneasiness; and neither my waking thoughts, nor my dreams, contributed towards the acquirement of tranquillity.

When I rose in the morning, I found that all my fears, though not my hopes, were in a fair way of being realized. Lady Erpingham had, on the overnight, given orders that preparations should be made for her departure from the abbey. Every thing was in a state of great forwardness before I had finished my breakfast; and the abbey from one end to the other, was agi-

tated with a bustle, corresponding to the vast magnitude of the undertaking.

Unwilling to trust to verbal messages, I wrote a note to Lady Erpingham, which contained a short exculpation of my conduct, and a request for a personal interview. An answer was returned in a similar manner from Miss Toadeater, in which her ladyship declined any personal communication, conscious that it would be an unnecessary waste of time to both parties.

I then, in the same way, desired to be favoured with a short conference with Miss Toadeater. This was kindly granted; and as the lady condescended to come to my study, I ventured to augur favorably of our meeting. Miss Toadeater heard my account of the unfortunate transaction, from beginning to end, with the most condescending attention, and without giving me the least interruption. But when I had

made an end of my defence of myself, she only confirmed what I had at first anticipated. Her ladyship's anger at the insult she had received, was not to be appeased; and whether I had been in fault or not, was of little consequence; for it was her fixed and unalterable determination, on no consideration to be exposed to a similar occurrence. With regard to my projected improvement, her ladyship expressed a hope that they would be successful; but Miss Toadeater, as the organ of course of her ladyship's opinions, appeared to entertain strong doubts of the beneficial result which I expected from my new system.

Thinking that Miss Toadeater would be pleased by my soliciting her advice and sentiments on the business, and when pleased might insensibly forward my cause, I requested to be made acquainted with the grounds of

her opinion. She knew nothing of the matter ; but as she found the barber was one of the new operators upon my lands, there could be no hopes.

I endeavoured to make it mathematically clear to the comprehension of Miss Toadeater that the part was not the whole. To this, after some consideration, she assented. Encouraged by my essay in demonstration, I went on to prove that all men were not barbers, and that although the most complete system might fail in some of its subordinate parts, such failure could not be considered as an impeachment of the general principles, which general principles I could venture to assert had stood the never failing test of experience. Besides, I added, allowing Mr. Bergamotte to have been a barber, there was no proof of his incompetency to agricultural pursuits. In support of this last argument I ad-

duced several instances in which men had suddenly and intuitively attained the highest pitch of eminence in professions directly opposite to those in which they had ~~been~~ previously trained.

Miss Toadeater listened with a gravity becoming the prime minister of the Countess of Erpingham, and with a look of a person who wished to have it supposed that they understood the question under discussion. When I had made an end of my elaborate harangue the lady with more than her usual sweetness of manner, declared herself particularly sorry that it was utterly out of her power to enter upon the business with Lady Erpingham, her ladyship having positively forbidden her to speak upon the subject. Miss Toadeater, however, was pleased to say that my arguments were incontrovertible and must convince a scep-

tic. They had completely satisfied her mind as to the great eligibility of my plans, and she doubted not they would have the same powerful effect upon the mind of Mr. Frill, to whose decision all matters of business would in future be left, and in whose judgement Lady Erpingham entertained the most unbounded confidence.

Here, as far as the Erpingham estates were concerned, all my golden dreams vanished from before me, leaving not a wreck behind. The attempt at reasoning with Mr. Frill, could I even have submitted to the degradation, would only have been the waste of so many words, and the loss of so much time.

In the afternoon her ladyship commenced her journey, directing her steps towards the great city. Upon an understanding that I was not to



take the liberty of addressing her upon matters of business, I was permitted to assist her in mounting her carriage. When she and her companion were seated I pulled off my hat and received from both a gentle inclination of the head as the carriage drove from the door. Had it been any where else but at Bingwood I should most unquestionably have seen her ladyship at the devil before I would have put such a constraint upon my inclinations. But I looked upon Bingwood to be *my* peculiar residence, and upon Lady Erpingham as an invited guest. I resolved therefore, that her ladyship should not have it in her power to accuse me of neglecting the honours of my house.

The departure of Lady Erpingham, as it blighted my hopes in one quarter, enabled me to bestow an undivided

attention upon another. In one respect it was a lucky circumstance, for I soon found the Bingwood estates capable of affording me an ample employment.

I must now dispose of my son's companions. The barber and the butcher had been early dispatched to their respective homes, both of them, I doubt not, thoroughly ashamed of what had passed. But the other plague seemed extremely loth to quit the good quarters into which fortune had been so kind as to throw him. The day had not passed before I painfully perceived that a great degree of intimacy was fast growing between the brothers-in-law, to which I would willingly have put an end had it been practicable.

Captain Flanagan in a short time became the companion of my son in all

his pursuits. Their congeniality of disposition had closely united them, and bid defiance to all my efforts for breaking the tie. All my attempts to lodge this son of Mars, without resorting to actual force, which I was often more than half inclined to employ, proved abortive. Hints he did not chuse to take, and when I reminded him of his previous determination to seek his wife, he told me that he entertained such an immense regard for the whole family that he could not reconcile it to his conscience to be so cruel as to quit his brother-in-law, when his brother-in-law seemed so happy in his company.

The consequence of this conjunction of royalty with nobility was that my house became a den for the reception of blackguards of every description. The Captain was a complete adept in

cock-fighting and badger baiting, and by the accommodations which Charles from his situation could command, the most eminent professors of those elegant accomplishments were drawn towards Bingwood. My house presented one continued scene of riot and disorder, and had it not been for the hope of witnessing the realization of all my splendid improvements, my continuance there would have been insupportable.

Before I close the present chapter, I may as well just mention that at the appointed rent day I duly received the arrears from all of the tenants who had quitted their farms, with the exception of the old man whose son Charles had been the means of ruining. Most of my old friends seemed fat, sleek, and contented. Few of them had thought of placing themselves in fresh situations,

and several of them had the impudence to tell me that I should soon want them back again, and then it would be their turn.

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CHAP. X.

## TENDERNESS.

THE money collected together at the rent day formed a pretty considerable sum, but the drawbacks upon it were enormous. Dr. Bubbleby visited me the following morning for the purpose, he said, of handing me a receipt for three thousand pounds on my paying him that amount. This demand brought to my recollection that I ought to have received for the last years tithe of such of the tenants as had quitted. But it was too late. I

had, at their request, and to prevent further trouble, furnished them with receipts in full of all demands. I had nothing to do but to sit down quietly with my loss.

I had likewise a further drain, and that by no means a small one. Mr. M'Estimate had already prepared me for making sacrifices at the first starting of the new system. Before the alterations on the farming buildings were commenced, I had rendered myself responsible to the different workmen, it was therefore fair and reasonable that they should be supplied with money upon account. When to this source of expenditure I added the amount of debts incurred in London and at Bingwood since my last settlement with my creditors, the remainder was wholly inadequate to support the current expences of a winter in the metropolis.

Not having the means, therefore, of

pursuing my inclinations, I wisely followed the dictates of necessity, and resolved to pass the winter and spring at Bingwood. The same cause kept my son in a similar situation. But as a country life presented so many more opportunities for the indulgence of his low propensities, than what the town could afford, no murmur escaped his lips. Captain Flanagan, his bosom friend and inseparable companion still honoured me with his company, and seemed to have intended that the lodgement which he had contrived to make should be permanent.

The Captain had always been a favourite with Charles, but he completely won his heart by the purchase of a bear from a travelling showman, which was regularly baited every Thursday afternoon in the riding house, to the great delight of the neighbouring blackguards of all ranks, and also to



such of their dogs as never had been honoured with one of bruin's close embraces.

As I had very little taste for field sports I had never maintained a hunting establishment, but Charles had of late laid me under pretty heavy contributions in the formation of a stud which he prided himself in being the best in the county. Both he and the Captain were never failing attendants at all the meetings of the —— hunt, and both of them seemed to follow the chase with the greatest avidity. To this, and to such other rural amusements as came within the occupations of a gentleman, I gave every encouragement, partly because it kept them at a distance from me, and partly because I considered that although every fox-hunter was not a gentleman, yet that there were some gentlemen who were fox-hunters, and I thought there was a chance, although

a distant one, that Charles might chuse his intimate associates from among the latter description.

The monotony of my life was sometimes interrupted by fresh demands for buildings or roads, from some of my Scotch tenants, and occasionally relieved by the sporting friends of Charles. With the neighbouring gentry I have already remarked I had not been in the habits of intercourse, but such as were respectable, I now welcomed as my own friends. This I did with pleasure, as there were some among them whose example Charles might have followed with great advantage to himself.

These visits, it must be owned, however, were not without their inconveniences. I shall just mention one, not meaning it as a "sample for all the rest," but merely as the most remarkable which I can call to mind. One

fine clear frosty morning, when the hounds of the —— Hunt, as well as all the other hounds within the operation of the frost, were indulged with a holiday, Sir Timothy Sweepstakes, the principal subscriber, and occasional huntsman to the said —— Hunt, drove up to the door of the abbey, in his cur-ricule, accompanied by Lady Sweepstakes, who appeared fast approaching to the time of her accouchement. I happened to be in the hall as the carriage stopped, and went out to assist the lady in alighting. Whether it was my awkwardness, or the lady's carelessness, I cannot say, but her ladyship contrived to miss the footing as she descended, and before I could prevent the accident, had rolled upon the pavement. The consequences of this mishap was a premature labour. Her ladyship was immediately carried to bed, the doctor sent for, and every

thing done by the housekeeper which our situation would admit.

In a short time Sir Timothy was presented with a son and heir, and received our congratulations accordingly. The lady was *as well as could be expected*, but it was of course impossible to think of her being removed. Bingwood Abbey, then for the first time since my birth was converted into a nursery. But this was far from being the worst part of the story. The lady in the straw was incapable of giving me any trouble, but it necessarily followed, that I should be annoyed by the company of Sir Timothy, who was compelled by decency to pass a considerable portion of his time, in the same house in which his wife was so peculiarly circumstanced.

A week had scarcely elapsed since the delivery of Lady Sweepstakes, when my son thought proper to invite

his brother fox-hunters to dinner, or as the circular summons expressed it, to a jollification. This I apprehend was done in compliment to Sir Timothy, who, as the frost unfortunately continued, found the time hanging very heavily upon his hands at Bingwood, and was desirous of something in the shape of amusement.

The party was numerous and seemed inclined to "drink deep ere they departed." I remained at the table as long as I could, but was compelled to retire from it on perceiving that the whole of them were losing sight of common decency. Having given the necessary directions to the butler and house-keeper to take care of such as were found under the table in a state of beastly insensibility, I went to bed.

My first sleep was interrupted by a tremendous noise upon the staircase. In the apprehension that thieves had

again made their appearance, I put on my night-gown, and grasping a brace of loaded pistols sallied boldly forth to ascertain the cause. To my utter astonishment, I perceived Sir Timothy, my son, the captain, and others, aided by a score of grooms in different liveries, in the act of conveying one of the hunters, bound in such a way as to prevent his kicking, up stairs upon their shoulders.

On enquiring the reason of this strange proceeding, I was informed that Sir Timothy Sweepstakes had laid a bet with Lord Rasper of five hundred guineas, play or pay, that his pye-bald hunter should clear the bed, which contained Lady Sweepstakes and the child, at a standing leap without doing any damage to either.

It was in vain I remonstrated against such an act of cruelty. I had madmen to deal with who were deaf to all my

persuasions. I appealed to Sir Timothy as a husband, and a father, but it was preaching to the winds; Sir Timothy declaring that five hundred guineas was more than all the *dogs wives*, and brats in the kingdom were worth. As I could obtain no influence over the masters, I at least determined to exert my authority over their lacqueys, whom I commanded instantly to desist, and to retire to the stable upon pain of personal chastisement.

But my interference came too late. The horse was already at the head of the staircase, and one exertion more which the rascals made in pretending to obey my orders, safely landed him on even ground. Here the animal was untied, and in spite of my prayers and entreaties was led to the door of the chamber which contained the lady in the straw, and was ushered into the room.

Here a new obstacle presented itself. Sir Timothy had engaged that the horse should leap over the bed. He allowed the term "bed" comprehended the bedstead, but he denied that he ever meant that the tester of the bed, and the hanging, should continue in their place. Lord Rasper, on the other hand, insisted that the term *bed* included every thing as it stood at the time the bet was made. He agreed, however, that it was reasonable the curtains should be drawn back, seeing that they were articles of a moveable description, and the person lying in bed might suit their own fancy in having them open or closed.

The parties argued this knotty point with the greatest vehemence, and had it not been for the timely interference and salutary advice of Captain Flanagan, the argument would have infallibly proceeded from high words to



blows. The Captain, loth that the wager should be undecided, obtained a silence while he stated the leading points on both sides. These he contrived to balance with such equality, that it would have been difficult to have determined on which side his real opinion laid. He strenuously advised that an end should be put to all verbal disputes, and that the removal or non-removal of the tester should be decided by the dice box.

This very equitable mode of settling the dispute was eagerly embraced by both sides. Sir Timothy and his Lordship accompanied by Flanagan went down into the dining-room to arrange this preliminary, leaving the rest of their friends to attend to the horse and the lady.

Fortune favoured Sir Timothy, and the tester of the bedstead was doomed to be removed. The lady during the

whole of these proceedings was in a state of agony difficult to be described, but easily to be conceived. But the dreadful state she was in did not make the slightest impression on the two legged brutes.

In a few minutes the tester was taken down, and the room cleared for the leap. At the leading of the horse to the bed-side the lady fainted, but all assistance was positively forbidden, Sir Timothy declaring that his wife was better as she was, than if she had her senses about her. In the latter case she might probably have frightened the horse by crying out.

At a signal from Sir Timothy, accompanied by a crack with his whip, the horse actually cleared the whole without touching the bed in the slightest degree, or doing any other damage, except destroying a magnificent toilet-table, and demolishing a superb look-

ing-glass, for which I had paid two hundred and fifty guineas.

Sir Timothy's shout of exultation, roused his wife, and he now permitted the attendants to give her the proper assistance. Hoping that she would soon be well, the *tender* husband hurried his friends back to the dining-room, that he might further expatiate upon the merits of his hunter, and receive the amount of his bet.

This miracle was succeeded by another more remarkable than the first, for Lady Sweepstakes actually recovered from the fright, and although she was for some days in the most imminent danger, she was able to receive her visitors at the usual time, and was in a condition to be removed with safety at the end of the month. Sir Timothy and his lady took their leave of me with many thanks for my kindness, and many apologies for the

trouble they had occasioned. Sir Timothy whispered in my ear at parting, that his wife was game to the back-bone. The worthy baronet, however, totally forget both the toilet-table and the looking-glass.

This occurrence so thoroughly shocked me, that I positively forbid any more dinner parties of the same description. Although I was not apprehensive of a similar scene, yet I knew not, to what pitch of absurdity their madness would next drive them. At all events, I determined that my house should not be the theatre of such horrible excesses.

The remainder of the winter, and the first part of the spring were passed, so far as I was concerned, in dull uniformity. I took care that within doors every thing should be preserved in a tolerable quietness, and whenever, as was frequently the case, the Captain

and Charles were brought home from their drunken revels with no other signs of life about them than a capability of breathing, they were trundled to their rooms without ceremony, and suffered to remain there until sleep had restored their recollection, and enabled them again to plunge in riot and disorder.

- It was with feelings of considerable regret that I saw the constitution of my son sinking under the continued round of debauchery, in which he lived, and from which it seemed beyond the power of man to wean him. Not that I entertained any sanguine expectations, that he would ever have been a credit either to me, or to himself, but there were many reasons which induced me to be desirous for the continuance of his existence, which was necessary to relieve me from my embarrassments. Besides my titles

would become extinct,—a family of high antiquity, and unblemished reputation would end with myself,—and the whole of my extensive possessions would devolve upon distant branches, with whom I had never maintained the slightest intercourse, and who, I well knew, had always viewed me with an eye of jealousy, as the fatal obstacle, which stood between them and their hopes.



## CHAP. XI.

*EXPECTATION.*

MY spirits since the fatal departure of Lady Erpingham from Bingwood had been none of the best, but as the spring advanced they gradually improved, more from every passing day bringing me nearer the completion of my new system, than from any physical benefit from the genial season.

The rent day at last arrived, and I resolved to be my own receiver. The first of my tenants who made his appearance was Mr. Bergamotte, who

had carefully kept out of my way since the dinner party. Considering him as the cause of Lady Erpingham's displeasure, I cannot say that I viewed him with any extraordinary degree of complacency, but perhaps, I was more in fault than himself. The recollection of the past seemed to have had a similar effect upon him, for it had apparently deprived him of his consequential look, and he approached the table at which I was sitting surrounded with my official paraphernalia of account books and receipts, with all that grovelling humility of deportment to which he must have been early accustomed

He handed me vouchers for the payment of taxes of every description, to an amount that staggered me. They had, he said, been all assessed upon his farm. He further told me, that his bills for the alterations in his house



and buildings had not yet been delivered in, but he should deduct them from the next half year's rent.

“Buildings!” said I, “surely you do not mean to charge me with all the foolish alterations you have made.”

“There have been no further alterations, my lord, than what were absolutely necessary for the suitable accommodation of Mrs. Bergamotte, my daughters and myself.”

“What the saloon, the drawing-room, the lawn, the virandas! You cannot imagine, Mr. Bergamotte, that I shall be such an idiot as to deem them necessary to the occupation of your farm.”

“Such, my lord, was my agreement with Mr. M'Estimate. The place, in the condition in which it appeared when we first saw it, was not habitable.”

“You took the farm, Mr. Berga-

motte, in the state it was formerly in. The house and the other buildings have been judged sufficient from generation to generation, and I shall never consent to make allowances for all the kickshaws which you and your foolish wife chuse to set up. I can certainly have no objection to your ornamenting the house as you please, but I have a most invincible objection that the costs and charges should be drawn from my pocket."

"On that point, my lord, the terms of the lease will decide. It is unnecessary at present to occupy your lordship's attention, as I now make no deduction on that score. In the meantime, your lordship will find this to be the balance of the present account between us."

"I counted the barber's money, and was on the whole satisfied. The rent after all the deductions were made,

was more than double the amount paid by the old man, who had complained to me of being ruined. The buildings once completed would put an end to further drawbacks upon that head, and if I was obliged to make the allowances for Mr. Bergamotte's alterations, I did not imagine that the sum would be very considerable; besides, the house was certainly an ornament to the estate. As far as the matter went, I augured well, for the Scotchmen not being incumbered with Mrs. Bergamotte's taste, could have no claims of the same description.

The next comer was one of my Scotch tenants, who told me that he was come according to the notice, but that he had little to say. As yet he had received nothing from his farm, and could not, therefore, be expected to pay rent. Such a thing in his own

country had never been heard of, for how was rent to be paid, but by the produce of the ground, and when did the ground bear a marketable crop in the beginning of M<sup>a</sup>y. He had paid some of the *cesses*, and should have to pay more, and he dared to say, when the accounts came to be settled after Michaelmas we should be about equal, for he should be at great expences this summer in making roads and other proper things for which I should have to make him a large allowance.

I have suffered so very severely from these northern locusts, that I am too much out of humour to attempt their dialect. Since my agricultural communication with them, the sound of a Scotch piper, the smell of Scotch snuff, and the high cheek bones of a Scotchman set me in a state of irritation almost equal to that of the Scotch fiddle. I shall therefore content my-

self with giving their sentiments in my own language, leaving the reader, particularly if he has participated in feelings like my own, to guess the rest.

The next that made his entrance was a fellow countryman to the last. He produced his accounts, by which it appeared that I was considerably in his debt. He had paid the rates and taxes—he had altered and improved the buildings, all of which he had covered with paper,—he had made a part of the roads for the occupation of his farm. He closed his statement by requesting the payment of the balance due to him, in order that he might be enabled to extend his improvements, and carry on his business.

I dismissed this claimant with a promise of enquiring into the justice of his demand and of settling it accordingly. I suggested to him the propriety of his not making further charges against me

of the same description. That, he answered, must depend on what he found to be necessary.

It is needless to enumerate the occurrences of the day. Suffice it to say, that from not one of my northern tenants did I receive a single farthing of rent. The excuses for non-payment were various, and the instance, I have just mentioned was not the only one in which the landlord was brought in a debtor. I referred to the fatal clauses in the leases, and found that I had made myself answerable for every thing which the gentlemen thought proper to demand, whether it was reasonable or not.

From the farms which had been thrown up by the Scotchmen, and subsequently engaged by credulous Englishmen, who, like Bergamotte, had left their former occupations, and deserted the needle, the awl, and the

comb for the plough and the harrow, I received the balances which they allowed to be due. All these men must of course have diminished their capitals to make good their payments. On the whole my receipts were not very far short of what they had formerly been, but they were subject to the half yearly payment to Doctor Bubbleby of fifteen hundred pounds, and to the other clergymen, who were satisfied with receiving the same amount as formerly.

The result of my rent day was of a nature calculated to put me somewhat out of humour with my new system. But I still looked to better times. These heavy deductions, I was satisfied could not last for ever, and must in great measure be done away with before the expiration of the next half-year.

I wrote an account of what had

passed to Mr. M'Estimate. I expressed myself greatly disappointed, particularly with my northern tenants. The surveyor, in reply to my letter, observed, "That it was impossible for tenants to pay such extraordinary high rents to their landlords, unless every facility was afforded them in their operations. It was necessary that they should be furnished with all possible means of abridging labour; and it was highly reasonable to expect that a total change of system could not be effected without some trifling inconveniences." He concluded by saying, "that the business, hitherto, had quite answered his expectations; and that I had been more fortunate than many of his other employers, some of whom had pursued the system with spirit for two years, and had not yet received a single half-penny."

Shortly after harvest, one of my



Scotchmen brought me a plan and specification for a threshing machine, to be worked by water. The cost, he said, would be only about eight hundred pounds. I referred to his former account, and found that he had already charged me for the erection of a machine to be worked by horses. I therefore refused to accede to his demand, alleging, in addition to its not being necessary, that the situation he had pointed out for the erection of the machine would not command water enough to set it in motion for above a month in the year.

He very coolly told me, that as I had refused to erect "such buildings as he required," he considered his lease as forfeited, and should throw it up. To this I did not make any great objection, as I felt assured that other tenants could be easily procured. I took no further notice of him; but the

next intelligence I heard was, that he had sold all his crops, and every thing that could be removed from the premises, and had decamped without the ceremony of taking leave, leaving me to pay for all the buildings and alterations he had made, and for which I had previously allowed.

I produced the rascal's accounts to the tradesmen, but they plainly convinced me that they had received nothing; and also proved to me that I was fully liable to their demands, as I had given directions that the tenants' orders might be complied with.

I again wrote to Mr. M'Estimate, who comforted me by saying, that there were rogues in all countries, and he was sorry to say, that Scotland was not entirely exempt from characters who were a disgrace to their fellow-citizens. He would see about getting me a new tenant immediately, and was

confident of succeeding. In the mean time, he requested the favour of an early settlement of his account, which he had taken the liberty of inclosing. Mr. M'Estimate was at Bingwood only four days, and his charge amounted to the very moderate sum of *thirteen hundred pounds* !!

These things served only as preludes to what I term my Scotch misfortunes. Captain Flanagan had become as necessary to my son as Villiers had been to myself. He led him by the nose in every thing ; and in the quality of his *prochain ami*, obtained an injunction from the Lord Chancellor, to prevent my breaking up the park, and cutting down the timber, conformably to the recommendation of M'Estimate, and the agreement with the Scotchmen. This involved me in law-suits with the tenants, who reluctantly gave up their prospects of gain, by being prevented

from the immediate cultivation of an extensive tract of fresh broke land.

I was now reluctantly compelled to resort to legal advice and assistance. The opinion of council was obtained, and was so far against me, that I was induced to get rid of the tenants who had anything to do with the park, by permitting them to sell their property on the spot, and by giving them bonds for the payment to each of them, of a sum equal to a year's rent of their respective farms, at a twelvemonth's date.

By this time I had begun to feel a considerable portion of disgust towards the new system, and to entertain strong suspicions of the expected advantages. I had already lost a sum equal to half a year's income, according to the old rental, and I began to fear that the next audit would not be much more productive.

When the hunting and shooting season finally closed, the country began to feel intolerably irksome, both to Charles and his *prochain ami*. The latter again talked of his wife, for whom his affection began to revive—at least in words. The Captain frequently heaved the tender sigh, and exclaimed against the hardheartedness of parents. As this was talking *at me*, and not *to me*, I did not think it worthy of notice; but as I was anxious to keep Charles in good humour, I agreed to pay a short visit to the metropolis, and accordingly wrote to apprise Lady Erpingham of our intention. Miss Toadeater, by her ladyship's commands, simply informed me, that our apartments would be prepared for our reception. I had given notice that the royal Flanagan would accompany us. But there was no welcome held out to him. However, as his presence was

not forbidden, we all agreed to construe silence into assent. This was the more reasonable interpretation, as both Lady Erpingham and her secretary were, on all occasions, so sparing of their words. I would willingly have transferred my residence to any other place; but circumstanced as I was, and continually reminded by the state of my pocket, of the absolute necessity of retrenchment and economy, I had no choice, and therefore drove directly to Erpingham House.

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CHAP. XII.{ *DISAPPOINTMENT.*

MY first step, on my arrival in London, was to send for Mr. M'Estimate. He came, and I explained to him the situation in which he had contrived to place me, and flatly accused him of betraying me into errors, which his experience in his profession must have enabled him to foresee. His countrymen, I told him, were a set of cormorants—they were never satisfied; and if their ultimate improvements were effected\_ at all, it would not be till

they had drawn every drop of blood in my veins.

As usual, I proceeded in a wrong course. I ought to have known, that to utter a word derogatory to any thing, be it what it may, that derived its origin from the other side of the Tweed, is an allowable cause for a Scotchman's indignation. If the foul fiend does not start within him at the time, it is only because the moment is not favourable for retaliation and revenge.

Mr. M'Estimate did not deign to make the least reply to the charges which I exhibited either against him or his countrymen, but preremptorily demanded the immediate settlement of his account ; at the same time declaring that he would not degrade himself nor his profession, by having any further concern with me. I might blunder on as I could, and if I ruined myself, it was my own fault, not his.



“ And this, Sir, you call an honourable mode of proceeding. You first lead me into errors, and then leave me to extricate myself as I can.”

“ Your lordship will excuse me, but we can have no further communication together, except in the payment of my demand, which, although I have no wish to offend your lordship, I must insist upon having immediately done.”

“ I can have no objection, Sir, to a fair remuneration; and care not how soon I get rid of such a scoundrel.”

“ Your lordship is pleased to compliment,” said the surveyor with a malicious grin.

“ Not in the least, Sir; I give the same unreserved opinion now of your conduct that I formerly did, when I entertained a favourable idea of your respectability and common honesty.”

“ Your lordship’s opinions are all of them so marked with judgment, that

it would be worse than sacrilege to dispute their correctness. But opinions, my lord, are not the current coin of this country. I must therefore again call your lordship's attention to my demand."

"I can have no objection to that, Sir, on your reducing it to a tenth part of its present amount."

"Not to be trifling any longer with your lordship, the demand I have made is according to the commission I have invariably charged. It is therefore impossible for me, my lord, to make the slightest deduction; and I advise your lordship, as a friend, to settle the business, to prevent any unpleasant consequences. I should be sorry to behave towards a nobleman in an unhandsome way; but I fear your lordship will compel me to act in a manner contrary to my inclinations."

I put an end to this conference by

ringing the bell, and ordering the servant to kick the rascal out of doors, an operation he literally performed.

The following day brought me a copy of a writ for the sum of thirteen hundred pounds, at the suit of Mr. Alexander M'Estimate, and a notice of action for the assault committed on his person by myself and servant.

I again took advice, and found myself in the wrong. I was told that both actions might be maintained; and that in all probability, he would recover very considerable damages for the assault, particularly as juries were apt to entertain some odd notions respecting aristocratical oppression.

My natural irascibility of temper was obliged to give way before dire necessity. By the advice of my lawyer, I paid five hundred pounds into court. This settled both the affairs, for I was never afterwards troubled upon either

case. In this way I have remained ignorant what portion of the five hundred pounds Mr. M'Estimate applied to the payment of his commission, and what portion to the kicks, which I will do the footman the justice to say, were most liberally bestowed upon his carcase.

I had led several persons to whom I had become indebted, to expect the discharge of their accounts from the proceeds of my last rent day. The result of that day had been far from enabling me to get rid of my obligations, and, as might naturally be expected, a considerable degree of impatience was shown. I was obliged to pacify them in the same way my father had formerly done, by urging the approaching end of my son's minority, for my hopes were by no means sanguine respecting the next audit.

Here I had a great advantage over my father. Charles's turn for extravagance could not be supplied, without his acting as I should direct him. I now made him privy to my intentions ; and it was agreed between us, that the produce of the Bingwood estates should be released from the settlement ; and the lands themselves, or their produce, if sold, equally divided between us.

Captain Flanagan materially assisted in the arrangements ; for he had made up his mind to share Charles's half, and his creditors judged his prospects to be sufficiently promising to allow him a further time.

I have no occasion, during my present stay in town, to make any mention of Lady Erpingham, for I should only have to repeat what I have said before. I shall likewise pass over many trivial

incidents, and proceed at once to the close of all my golden dreams, so far as my new system was concerned.

My Michaelmas audit was not of a nature a whit more promising than that of the preceding Ladyday. Mr. Bergamotte, as before, was the first to make his appearance. He tendered me his accounts for his building improvements, including the new saloon and the drawing-room. It would have been useless to have made any objections to allowing them, seeing that I stood pledged to the payment; but experience has taught me the propriety of ascertaining, that these large sums had been actually paid to the different tradesmen before I admitted them as offsets against the rent.

The *ferme ornée* of Mr. Bergamotte, I will do both him and Mrs. Bergamotte the justice to say, was one of the most elegant *bijoux* I had ever beheld; but

I nevertheless thought it a little hard to be saddled with all the expences incurred in the formation of this little earthly paradise, which I was informed, was the appellation Mrs. Bergamotte bestowed upon it, just after every thing had been completed to her taste. But I had no remedy whatever against the allowance; the words in the lease were peremptory, and admitted of no qualification. I was to be at the expence of erecting whatever buildings the tenant might require; and had reserved to myself no right of interfering, either in matters of necessity, or in those of inclination. However, as the barber professed his intention of immediately paying the remainder of the rent, I consented that the whole should stand over till the ensuing rent day.

From some of my Scotch tenants, I now got a *little* towards the rent, but this I attributed in a great measure to

my having desired it might be expressly understood, that I should no longer submit to be trifled with.

Many of the tenants urged that the ensuing crop would be the first by which they could really benefit themselves under the new system, the former being only to be considered as a course preparatory to the improved husbandry. They would then be enabled to proceed with regularity and certainty. If I now urged them beyond what they could conveniently bear, their means would necessarily be cramped, and they would consequently be unable to fulfil their agreements.

Whatever appearance my new system *promised*, for I had promises enough, I saw on reflection, no reason to be dissatisfied with the interference of my son and Captain Flanagan, relative to the park. The letting it originally had gone much against the grain,



and had not M'Estimate incessantly urged me I never should have consented to the measure. The rascals who held it, and who contrived to make a prey of me on my inability to adhere to the covenants on my part, I sent to the devil, comforting myself that it was a "good riddance of bad rubbish."—I should indeed have forgotten them entirely had it not been for those cursed things called bonds, which I had given to free myself from their clutches, and which had now only a few months to elapse before they became due.

With considerable labour and expence, the sods which had been turned up were replaced as well as they could be in their former position. A fresh stock of deer were procured and the park in a short time began to resume its former appearance.

¶ The next rent day fully exposed the fallacy of my schemes for the improvement of my income, and left me more

involved than ever. At the invitation of Lady Erpingham I had attended her at *her* residence, for the Easter holidays, and did not get to Bingwood until within a week of the day appointed for receiving the rents.

The storm now broke upon me. Not one of my Scotch tenants were remaining. Every one of them had disposed of all their moveable effects. The produce of the last harvest, their cattle, furniture, and effects of every description were gone, and I had to take possession of a complete desert. Land exhausted by over-cultivation, and buildings, notwithstanding pretended repairs, in a state of delapidation, were every thing that remained to reimburse me for the loss of rent, and to meet the several demands for rates and taxes, which came pouring in upon me in all directions. The tradesmen remained unpaid, and my whole estate presented

one scene of ruin and desolation, sparingly interspersed with the marks of industry among a few of the old tenants whom it had not been in my power to disturb, and partially adorned with the glittering ornaments which Mr. Bergamotte had stuck up in every part of his farm.

The day preceding that on which the rents were to have been paid, I learnt that an execution, which had been long hanging over Mr. Bergamotte's head, had been put in force, and that all his property was placed at the disposal of the sheriff or his deputies. The upholsterer who had so superbly furnished this magnificent bijou, had been induced to trust his goods under the impression that Mr. Bergamotte had left off business with a fortune, which had been scraped out of pomatum and lavender, and had retired to spend the rest of his days in the

tranquil enjoyments of rural seclusion. The upholsterer had been put off from time to time with excuses, but as soon as he learnt the source from which his debtor expected to derive the means of satisfying the demand, he commenced those proceedings which led to the close of poor Bergamotte's agricultural career.

It was needless to stand upon further ceremony. Forbearance could be of no service to any one but the upholsterer. I therefore saved what I possibly could, and in my capacity of landlord distrained over every thing upon the farm to the entire supercession of the upholsterer's prior claim. The every thing, however, when exposed to the hammer went but a little way towards the extinction of the arrears of rent.

Poor Bergamotte, like myself, had become enamoured of the new system.

The great gains of the farmers had been so often commented upon in the public prints, and the enormous profits of farming under the improved system, had been so flamingly and so eloquently set forth in the publications of Mr. M'Estimate, that the whole soul of the poor barber and his wife was set upon a farm. In a farm how was it possible for them to fail in the rapid accumulation of a fortune? Did not many farmers now keep their carriages, drink their wine, and carry their heads as high or higher than the gentry? And how could all this be accomplished unless bank notes issued almost spontaneously from the land?

The sale of his stock of perfumery, wigs, and combs, together with the collection of his outstanding debts, had enabled the barber to scrape up a little money for his outset. Clear of the world, and with a few hundred pounds

in his pocket he had taken my farm at the recommendation of his *magnus Apollo*, Mr. M'Estimate, who knew as little of his real circumstances as the upholsterer, and instead of retiring into the country to enjoy a competency already procured, he was infatuated with the hope of gaining an ample fortune by a pursuit wholly strange to him, and for which he was in no respect whatever calculated.

I felt for the poor deluded man, but it was wholly out of my power to befriend him, had I been so inclined. There was a certain degree of sympathy between us. We had been equally the dupes of an empty conceited quack. Unlike the prudent who live within their means, poor Bergamotte and his family had lived up to their *expectations*, which were of the most sanguine description. While money or credit could be procured, his wife and daugh-

ters indulged in all the luxuries of life, and at the termination of his agricultural campaign, the poor man found himself several thousand pounds in debt. I sincerely pitied him, for the new system had not left me in a much better state, allowing for the great disproportion in our situations. My person was fortunately sacred, but poor Bergamotte made a rapid transition from his *ferme ornée* to the county gaol.

I was pleased that Lady Erpingham continued in ignorance of these unhappy transactions. Not that I apprehended I should have heard anything from her lips to have reminded me of my *gentleman farmer*, for, thanks to her insensibility, she was above all ill-natured illusions, but had she been aware of them, I could not have looked her in the face without seeing my own folly reflected in it.

The only monies I received were from my old tenants that held by lease, and from the sale of Bergamotte's effects. Nothing remained for me to do but to replace the estates as they were before the change. In this I succeeded; most of my old tenants, whom I had turned out of their farms, returned to them, reminding me that it was now *their turn*. I was even happy at the certainty of receiving the former rental subject however to a very large allowance in the first instance, for the very bad condition in which they had to retake the lands.



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## CHAP. XIII.

### *ARRANGEMENTS.*

**WHEN** things, they say, are at the worst they will mend. Perhaps it was this idea which actuated me in looking around and calculating the extent of my obligations to Mr. M'Estimate. The result of my labours was the conviction that I had been a loser of rather more than eight and twenty thousand pounds in money, besides a depreciated property.

This I considered was quite sufficient, but the entrance of Dr. Bubbleby

reminded me that I had agreed to pay him annually the sum of three thousand pounds for the term of twenty-one years, while the utmost I could expect to receive for the tithes from the tenants would not exceed half that amount.

The doctor with his usual smile (for since Lady Erpingham's departure he had thrown off his wig and recovered his simper,) requested the payment of his tithes. He made many tender enquiries after the Countess, congratulated me on my appearance and hoped that my new system answered my expectations.

This was more than I could bear. The doctor must necessarily have known how I was circumstanced; his expression was therefore a deliberate insult. In my rage I cursed the doctor's hypocrisy and himself into the bargain.

"You must well know," added I, "the

situation in which I have been placed by the knaves and fools which have swarmed about me. The delusion is now at an end, and the amount of my losses I am ashamed to mention. I entered into an agreement with you on the supposition that the plans of that scoundrel M'Estimate would enable me to fulfil it without injury to myself. Indeed you took an advantage of me, but you surely cannot expect a continuance of the payment when all hopes of success in the plan pursued have vanished."

"I inquire but little, my lord," replied the hypocrite, "into the affairs of other people. It is sufficient for me to attend to my own. Your lordship's success or failure in schemes with which I could have no sort of concern could be of no consequence to me, and had I even interfered in the slightest degree, your lordship might very justly

have accused me of presumption ; even though that interference might only have been given in the shape of advice. I am truly sorry that your lordship's schemes have been unsuccessful, but I should have made no complaint if your lordship had discovered that the tithes were worth double the sum which your lordship undertook to pay for them. Your lordship will always find me a man as incapable of receding from my word as I would from my bond, and I expect to find a similar disposition on the part of your lordship."

I told the doctor that as to money I had none, neither for him nor myself. But he begged to remind me that I had money's worth, and declared it to be his unalterable intention to abide by the terms of the agreement between us. Be that as it might, I told him, he must be contented to wait like other creditors ; unless he thought proper, which I

should consider the most advisable as well as the most *honest* plan for him to pursue, to cancel the agreement for the three thousand a year and again take the tithes upon himself.

The doctor did not seem the least inclined to do either. He declared his inability to wait. He was poor and could not afford it. His *little pittance* was as much to him, as a large income was to a nobleman like myself. Times were hard, distress was every where prevalent, and he was continually regretting that he had nothing to bestow towards the relief of the poor and helpless. Cancelling the agreement was a thing that he could not think of for a moment. Since I had taken the tithes upon myself he had lived with his flock as a shepherd. The quarrels between him and his parishoners had never ceased from his first entry into the parish till he came to terms with me.

But now the cause of contention was removed, every thing was harmony.

As I was not in a frame of mind to have any further squabbling with him, I requested, that I might be left to myself. His age was the protection of his person, or I hardly know what would have been the consequences. Death I feared was the only friend that could relieve me from the fangs of this merciless shark, and I felt myself somewhat comforted that in the journey of life the doctor had at least five and twenty years the start of me.

My son was now the only person to whom I could look for a freedom from embarrassment. In the ensuing spring his minority would cease. To that event I could alone look forward with any prospect of comfort or satisfaction. I made, indeed, one more attempt to engage the assistance of Lady Erpingham, by making her acquainted with

the difficulties I had to surmount. She listened to the tale as usual with the most steady composure, and without making the least reference to the miscarriage of my plans for the improvement of my property, but told me that it was impossible for her to pay attention to any affair of business except through the medium of Mr. Frill, from whom I should receive her answer to any specific proposition I thought fit to lay before him.

To see Mr. Frill upon the subject was out of the question. Before I parted from her ladyship, however, I managed to create a considerable degree of alarm upon her mind, by giving her to understand that an execution against myself would reach to the moveables which were not strictly heirloom, both at Erpingham and in the London house. This was striking at the very root of her ladyship's gran-

deur, and she now *requested* that I would explain the matter to Mr. Frill. On my positive refusal to have any communication whatever with Mr. Frill, her ladyship desired that time might be allowed her to consult with her friends, in order that she might take such steps as would avoid the threatened inconveniences.

The next morning I was honoured by a visit from the Duke of ———, the brother-in-law of Lady Erpingham. Our intercourse had been very confined, and as neither his Grace nor myself were much overburthened with small talk he came at once to the business of his errand.

He had waited on me, he said, in consequence of a consultation between his family and the Countess, and was sorry to hear from his sister-in-law, such an account of my embarrass-



ments. He should be extremely unwilling that any thing which could happen to me from my imprudence should disturb the establishment of Lady Erpingham. He had therefore made up his mind to offer me the full value of the furniture and moveables at both houses, as the amount should be settled by appraisers duly appointed. In addition to that he would take a lease of both houses 'for a definite time, or for the life of his sister-in-law if I chose it, paying the rent of the house in London to me, and the rent of the house and park at Erpingham to the Countess's trustees. In this way he should be able to accommodate her ladyship with both residences, and she would then be free from the apprehension of any unpleasant proceedings.

However grating such a proposition

was to my feelings, it had its uses and advantages. My adopting it would put me in possession of a considerable sum of ready money, which was necessary as well for my own wants as to keep Charles in good humour.

The business was settled as soon as the appraisers had delivered in their report, and the money was paid into the hands of my bankers. As my library, pictures, a large stock of wine in both places, the deer, her ladyship's horses and carriages, with a long train of *et ceteras*, were included in the inventory, the amount was very considerable, and set both Charles and myself at ease for the time that was to elapse before his minority ceased. I remember one reason of my agreeing to the arrangement, and even pressing its execution, took its rise from Dr. Bubbleby, who had brought an action against me upon the agreement, in

which in a few months he must have obtained a judgment. I was not a little pleased at disappointing his expectations; and thought that on his failing to obtain his money by foul means, he would be induced to cancel the agreement and get what he could by fair means. I considered the mode in which he had taken advantage of me, so truly unhandsome, and even rascally, that I was resolved to defeat him, and therefore prevailed upon the Duke to take a nominal transfer of my personal property at Bingwood into the bargain. His grace was to all intents and purposes a man of the strictest honour, notwithstanding in this instance he lent his sanction to what I know many persons would have deemed a palpable fraud; I could therefore place the most firm dependence that the trust would not be abused.

The Duke was no sooner in virtual

possession of the three places of residence, than the newspapers blazoned forth the fact, that his Grace of —— had taken the town and country houses of the Earl of Erpingham on lease for twenty-one years, and had purchased all the furniture and effects preparatory to the marriage of his grace's eldest son with a young lady of distinguished rank and immense fortune.

In this way my creditors of every description were given to understand that all proceedings at law were useless, and that I was in a state to put them at defiance. They instantly became as submissive as they were before violent. Dr. Bubbleby put a stop to his action and wrote me a letter in which he protested that any thing which had occurred that I might consider unpleasant had been not only without his directions, but even without his knowledge; his attorney hav-

ing commenced proceedings simply upon his saying that he should like to be paid. He hoped I would acquit him from all blame in the transaction, and expressed his readiness *now* to cancel the agreement and give me a full discharge.

Here was an opportunity of serving my tenants by putting it out of the doctor's power to worry and harrass them in future, for I am certain the doctor would have caught at any thing rather than lose every thing, which I was resolved he should do if he went on. But it was my fate never to take any measures which should be of real service to any one who deserved it. The consequences of my omission were, that Dr. Bubbleby became more oppressive than ever, assigning as a reason the losses he had sustained through me, and the necessity he was under of reimbursing himself by some means or other.

I could not but wonder at the ease, with which the Duke, whom I well knew had for years been almost as much distressed as myself, should suddenly have been enabled to come forward with the money. This enigma was however soon solved through the negligence of his grace's lawyer. The money was a *part* of her ladyship's savings. What the whole of Lady Erpingham's savings amounted to I can form no idea, but from circumstances which casually transpired a short time after, I had reason to believe that they were very considerable.

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## CHAP. XIV.

### *INSTABILITY.*

I MUST now carry my story a little back in order to balance my accounts with my daughter Lady Caroline Flanagan, and sorry am I that what I have to relate of her is far from being of a nature either satisfactory or consolatory.

On his first coming to town, the Captain earnestly sought after his wife, but when he learnt that there was no way whatever in which her fortune could be applied to his uses, he gave

himself no trouble respecting her person, but contentedly hung upon Charles as the most promising bargain of the two.

The residence of Caroline at Lady Littleworth's had drawn to the house of the dowager much idle company of both sexes. My daughter was really a fine woman, and had learnt from her *chaperone* the way of setting herself off to the best advantage. In this equivocal and irksome situation of a "widow bewitched," she remained for some time exposed to temptation, and to the assiduities and allurements of the myriad of empty fops that continually fluttered round her.

In a certain sphere of high life, a female may assume privileges which would be considered unbecoming with those of an inferior rank. Lady Caroline prided herself upon the number of her admirers, among whom she



reckoned the Honourable Charles Burford, a gentleman well known in the annals of gallantry and distinguished by the appellation of the "Lady Killer," and from what follows the title may be more apt than is perhaps commonly imagined.

The coquetry of Lady Caroline rendered her proof against the allurements of all her admirers, Mr. Burford excepted, who was far from being contented with remaining a cold blooded disciple of Plato. The consequence of this *friendship* between two persons in the prime of life and of the opposite sex, was extremely natural.—Lady Caroline was in a fair way of presenting her husband with a son and heir.

The rest I must hurry over.—By whom the fatal medicine which was to prevent exposure was administered, I could never satisfactorily ascertain.—There was a mystery and a murder.

ous mystery.—If it was given by the hand of the paramour, be it on his own head. At all events Lady Caroline expired in the most excruciating agony.

The death of an individual in a family, let that family be high or low, rich or poor, noble or plebeian, cannot fail of casting a momentary gloom over every part of it. I am not going to enter into a dissertation upon death. My intention is merely to shew that the loss of my daughter, notwithstanding the very small portion of affection which subsisted between us, did excite in my breast a something beyond cold indifference. If I did not do honour to her memory by cherishing a tender recollection of the few virtues she possessed, to the exclusion of her vices and follies, I at least regretted that a being who was indebted to me for her existence had been untimely dispatched in

the prime of life to that "bourne whence no traveller returns." However little the intercourse between us had been, I still felt that she was my child, and now blamed myself for having omitted to assist in the formation of her mind and manners in early youth. Her heart was not naturally deficient in those qualities which render a person estimable in the eyes of others; but her education had been so grossly neglected, her mind was so completely uninformed, that her good qualities never had an opportunity of developing themselves. Drawn suddenly from the country, where she was suffered to run almost wild, to be introduced into society where nothing is natural and every thing constrained, it is only astonishing that she acquitted herself as she did. Marrying as she was fated to do, and in a manner deserted by both her parents—thrown upon the world,

with nothing to guide her but her own slender stock of discretion, it could be no wonder that her virtue wavered and that she at last fell a sacrifice to passions which, circumstanced as she was, she could hardly be expected to controul.

On the death of her daughter Lady Erpingham most religiously adhered to all the observances prescribed from time immemorial in great families. Her ladyship kept the house the stipulated number of days, and admitted in strict order of priority her several friends, according to the different degrees of intimacy and relationship. The features of the Countess's face were of that happy cast as to serve for expressing all the various passions under the sun which she was capable of feeling, with hardly any trouble to herself.

But the outward grief made ample amends for the lack of inward sorrow,

Lady Erpingham clothed herself, as well as her whole establishment, in *black*. I cannot call it mourning, for except in the sombre appearance which every thing was made to assume I could not perceive the slightest alteration.

The last assertion is perhaps of too unqualified a nature; there was a difference in the arrangements for her ladyship's morning's airing. She alternately drove her black and grey horses, but during the first three months of the mourning, the grey horses were sent to the straw yard, and the black horses had the undivided honour of dragging her ladyship from place to place.

The pride of Lady Erpingham induced her to bestow upon her daughter a most magnificent funeral. The expences she very liberally took upon herself and defrayed from her private purse. In collecting together an in-

mense assemblage of carriages to accompany the earthly remains of Lady Caroline Flanagan to the stone's end, and in directing that the trappings of woe should be of the most splendid description, the Countess rested satisfied that she had performed all the duties that could be required even from a fond and exemplary mother, much less from a mother of rank, where fondness and example are as seldom found as looked for. Miss Toadeater had led the visitors of her ladyship to understand, that the slightest mention or allusion to Caroline would harrow up a world of sorrow, her memory therefore soon sunk into that oblivion from which no one about the Countess had the smallest inclination to disturb it.

As to myself I can honestly say, that I was a real mourner. I mourned for Lady Caroline's foibles, I mourned for

the cause of her death, and I mourned for her loss. But as the proverb says, it is an ill wind that blows nobody good. By the settlement I made on my daughter the twenty thousand pounds, in case of her decease without children would revert to myself. The money was acceptable, but it was the means of stirring up strife between me and my son. The Captain had made a friend of Charles in the business, and the latter strenuously insisted that it was for my honour as well as for my credit that the wife's fortune should be yielded up to the husband. On my refusal Charles threatened me with refusing his assent to the arrangements in contemplation on his coming of age. This alarmed me, and I thought it advisable to compromise, but experience had taught me the utility of cautious dealings.

In the first place I ascertained the

amount of the Captain's debts, which I found to be less than five hundred pounds. I then guaranteed the creditors the payment of their several demands on their again taking him into custody. With the Captain once more in limbo I had little difficulty in negotiating. His ardent desire of liberty led him to agree to any terms I proposed.

In return for my interference on his behalf I required his assistance in maintaining Charles in good humour till he was of age. On his agreeing to this preliminary I undertook to pay the Captain's debts in full, and to pay him the sum of two thousand pounds the day the deeds were signed, by which I became absolute master of my allotted portion of the Bingwood estates.

But with all my foresight I neglected a most material stipulation. I had not provided that the Captain should desist



from leading Charles into that routine of debauchery and dissipation which I foresaw must soon terminate his existence, possibly before my ends were served. All attempts to separate him from Flanagan were ineffectual, and without a complete separation there could be no hopes of amendment.

I had no complaint to make of Flanagan, but for the course of life in which he kept my son constantly engaged. Like many of his countrymen, he was thoughtless and passionate; but he had neither trouble nor care, except for the present moment. Unlike the serpent who wormed himself into my confidence at the same period of life, he had no view beyond the enjoyment of the time being; and I verily believe, that so far from preying upon Charles, he would have cheerfully shared his purse with him. At the death of his wife, the Captain, like the other parts

of the family, dressed himself, for a short time, in black ; but as soon as decency permitted, he cast off his sable habiliments, and with them all his grief; and prepared to achieve fresh conquests in the field of love, in the hope of being more successful in his operations than he had been with Caroline. I have been told that his stars were subsequently propitious to him; and that an old dowager of sixty-three was smitten with his charms, and after a courtship of three hours, had made him master of a lovely person and large fortune. But as my intimacy with the Captain was of short continuance, I cannot vouch for the fact. If it be true, the old liquorish —— (I do not like to fill up the blank,) richly deserved the fate which I am confident awaited her.

The death of my daughter was succeeded by the alarming illness of my

son. He and his companion had been to a masked ball in character. The heavy dress, which Charles wore, was put on over his usual clothes. The heat of the room, and the exertion requisite to maintain his part, were more than his debilitated frame was enabled to support. He withdrew from the party in haste, and undressed himself in a room without a fire, exposing himself, while in a state of profuse perspiration, to a cold sharp air. An inflammation upon the lungs was the consequence of his extreme imprudence. The physicians considered him in the most imminent danger, and gave me reason to expect that every moment would be his last.

Knowing how much I had at stake, my attendance upon him was unceasing ; and, in the course of a few days, the disorder had arrived at its crisis, and had taken a favourable turn. I

had at last the satisfaction of having my cares repaid by the declaration of the medical attendants, that all positive apprehension had ceased for the present; and that with the greatest caution and strictest temperance, there was a strong probability of a perfect recovery.

My joy at the announcement of his convalescence was excessive; and I am satisfied, arose more from the preservation of my son, for his own sake, than for the event which first induced me to watch by his bed-side, and to hope for the prolongation of his existence. Health may lay the foundation of a friendship, (if indeed it is possible for such a thing to exist at all,) but it is the sick bed which strengthens and cements it. I admired the fortitude of Charles under his sufferings, and felt the glow of affection increase in warmth from the time he refused to take either

nourishment or medicine, unless administered by my own hand.

His recovery was gradual, but his amendment was certain. As soon as he was judged to have gained sufficient strength to bear the motion of a carriage, it was deemed expedient that he should be removed to a more genial climate. The Continent being closed against us, the south coast of Devonshire was fixed upon, as the most efficient substitute for the mild air of Lisbon or Montpellier; and into Devonshire I resolved to attend him.

A sick couch had no great charms for his bosom-friend the Captain. I had therefore little difficulty in prevailing upon this descendant of royalty to retract his offer of being the third in the party, particularly as my style of reasoning was strengthened by a few hundred pounds, which I presented to him, for the purpose of supporting

himself in a manner becoming his high birth and accomplishments. By this means Flanagan was placed beyond the power of giving me any annoyance in the plan I had formed for the re-establishment of Charles's health, and for the improvement of his moral character. I thought it would be a favourable time to work upon his mind ; to direct his attention to pursuits adapted to his rank in life ; and to withdraw him wholly from his former habits.

While Charles continued in positive danger, his mother, for form's sake, entered the chamber of sickness as the clock struck two. Her ladyship did her son the honour of asking the nurse after the health of the patient. Whatever the answer was, she left the room hoping that he would be better. This, however, did not satisfy her maternal feelings, for she as regularly made enquiries through the medium of Miss

Toadeater, at ten o'clock in the morning, and at the same hour in the evening. Even these visitings and enquiries must have been attended with an effort on the part of Lady Erpingham, as they must certainly have broken in upon some of her stated employments. When the physicians pronounced Charles to be out of danger, I flew to her with the intelligence; but so little was I acquainted with her ladyship's countenance, that I was unable to discover whether she was pleased at the prospect of her son's recovery, or displeased at my having taken the liberty of intruding myself into her apartments, without the usual ceremony of permission and introduction.

The change of air produced the expected beneficial results. I witnessed a daily amendment in my son's looks, and felt that his strength increased at almost every step. He appeared to

receive my attentions with gratitude. I was pleased at his readiness to adopt my suggestions, and insensibly regarded him with the eyes of fondness and affection. Every hour made me take shame to myself for having suffered him to be brought up in a state of ignorance, little short of barbarity. His feelings, which had been rendered acute by bodily pain, had lost all their callosity, and still retained that sensibility to which pain had first given rise. He was alive to his own situation, and fully aware of the errors he had committed. If there was one thing which demanded my attention more than another, it was the extreme delicacy with which he avoided all reference to his early life, well aware that he could not broach the subject without exposing his parent to the pangs of regret.

In the account I have now given of



my son, I may be mistaken. It is probable I may have been deceived by my own sensations. I had found Charles different from what I had expected—changed from what I had previously seen him. In the fulness of my heart, I may have given him credit for more merit than he really did, or was ever likely to possess. Be that as it may, I certainly felt as a father proud of his offspring. I had not many years to live in the world, and I was not a little proud that my representative would preserve the respectability of his family, at least as well as I had done.

In the midst of the pleasing prospects which inveterate habit of visionary castle-building was always picturing to my fancy, I recollected the motives which had induced me to refuse severing the family estates, and began to use the same train of reason-

ing with regard to my son. But, in our case, the step was absolutely necessary; although my debts did not come under the appellation of “debts of honour,” they were such to me, and I could never have looked forward to comfort till I had honourably discharged them. I made Charles acquainted with the actual circumstances under which I was placed, and found him ready to meet my wishes in every respect, and willing to make every sacrifice for my present and future ease. I blushed for myself when I called to mind my own behaviour in a parallel case, and considered that half of the misery which I had known in the world, had been inflicted on me as a punishment for a neglect of the first of duties.

Satisfied with the society of each other, we continued rambling from place to place, until the near approach

of the period which was to release Charles from his state of pupilage. We then returned to London, when, after a warm encomium upon his merits, I desired Lady Erpingham to embrace a new son. But she was as indifferent of the new son as she had been of the old one, suffering all maternal solicitude to evaporate in simply hoping that he was better.

Our next steps were to arrange the necessary deeds, and to celebrate the termination of Charles's minority. Bingwood was the place fixed upon by both of us. Charles had taken an early dislike to Erpingham ; besides, it was no longer mine. The furniture, and the house itself, was the acknowledged property of the Duke of ———. The pride of my son seemed as much hurt by this circumstance as my own was, but it was not to be remedied ; for I do not think that to have saved the

world from destruction, Lady Erpingham would have been induced to run the risk of being disturbed in her arrangements.

Previous to leaving London, I again resorted to a public advertisement for the purpose of ascertaining the exact amount of my debts. As a lawyer was a necessary instrument to our proceedings, I devolved that task upon his shoulders. My son and I agreed, that a sufficiency should be sold from the Bingwood property to clear both him and myself from all incumbrances, and that the remainder should be equally divided between us. The part left would, I calculated, leave enough for us both, according to the diminished scale of our desires. Until Charles formed an establishment of his own, he would be provided with a country house, and Lady Erpingham

would of course permit her son to have the "run" of the town house. By this means, his income would be adequate to his rank, while he remained a bachelor; and I intended, whenever he settled for life, to give up Bingwood to him entirely, as well as a considerable part of the income I had reserved for himself. We had then only to look forward to the departure of Lady Erpingham to be again in affluence, but in the mean time we should be in comfort.

How easy is it for the imagination to revel in schemes of happiness which it has formed, and how rarely are those schemes realized. But there is a gratification in those visionary pleasures, which has at least the merit of being innocent. Even now, while my head is tracing the sensations which I had formerly experienced, I forgot

my disappointments, and ceased to think that hope had for ever deserted me.

In this state, which to me was approaching towards happiness, we arrived at Bingwood. The sight of my old tenants now re-established in their farms, and the air of gaiety which surrounded us, made me feel myself six-and-thirty years younger ; for the scene which was then presented upon a similar occasion, forced itself upon my recollection. Under what different auspices was I ushered into life, to those which now attended upon my son. In my case, the immediate possession of wealth almost unbounded ; in my son's case, having to secure a father's comforts, by the same means which I had refused to my own parent. Myself, on the day of festivity, enjoying the most exuberant health ; my son but newly risen from the couch of

sickness. The contrast of our situation created many painful reflections, and my heart felt as heavy as if it had been laden with the foreboding of the evils which the coming day was destined to bring forth.

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## CHAP. XV.

### *A FATAL CHALLENGE.*

THE long-wished-for day at last arrived, and was ushered in with every demonstration of joy. The preparation for the festival had occupied several of the preceding weeks, and bid fair to rival the honours formerly done to myself. The nobility and gentry in the neighbourhood, as well as a numerous assemblage of Charles's acquaintance were invited to partake of the entertainment, and to witness the sports which the tenants and the pea-



santry had arranged among themselves to celebrate the occasion. Wherever Charles made his appearance, the acclamations rent the air. With such of the farming classes as took pleasure in the combats of cocks and dogs, and in all field sports of a minor as well as major description, Charles had always been popular; and, except in the instance of the young fellow whom he had caused to be committed for poaching, he had not been guilty of any glaring act of oppression.

Although Charles's recovery had been rapid, he was still much of an invalid. He had not only to struggle against the weakness which naturally follows severe indisposition, but it was evident that his constitution had suffered considerable injury from his early courses; and the cordial greeting and the look of satisfaction with which he received his old companions, Sir

Timothy Sweepstakes, Lord Rasper, and his brother foxhunters, made me apprehensive that there was no small danger of his relapsing into his former habits. I dreaded the consequences of fresh excesses, and earnestly besought him to be careful of his health, and above every thing to avoid a too eager pursuit of the bottle.

As far as promises could go, I was satisfied. Charles urged the necessity he was under of receiving his old acquaintances as formerly, but assured me that he now too well knew how to estimate the blessings of health, to rashly throw away the poor remains which disease and dissipation had left him. But I still dreaded the performance, and as the day advanced I was convinced that my apprehensions were well founded. I plainly perceived by the company he selected immediately about himself, that his former propen-

sities, although they had been suspended in consequence of his illness were far from being eradicated from his breast.

He talked with delight to his old associates of their former exploits, and listened with the greatest glee to the recounting of scenes of a similar nature which had happened since his departure from them.

In mingling with the tenantry, I could see that his attention was arrested only by those who had heretofore joined with him in his low pursuits, leaving the most respectable among the farmers altogether unnoticed.

The party at dinner was numerous, but they were more to be considered as the friends of Charles than of myself. As I had mingled so little with the surrounding inhabitants few could have been present on my account, ex-

cept indeed, my old *friend* Doctor Bubbleby, for as the bone of contention between us no longer existed, we managed to interchange civilities as if nothing had happened. My eyes were frequently directed towards the part of the table where Charles was seated, particularly at those times when I found the bottle was circulating. I was gratified to find that he was conducting himself with a sufficient degree of caution, and I ventured to entertain a hope that he would not be thrown off his guard. He had managed to resist the united efforts of Sir Timothy Sweepstakes and Lord Rasper, with more firmness than I gave him credit for possessing, and I augured well from observing that he smiled when he was charged by them with having become a milksop.

About two hours after the desert had been placed upon the table, I left the

dining room upon a trifling excuse. My motives for so doing originated from the supposition that my presence would be a check upon the general hilarity of the company. I found myself for many reasons incapable of deriving amusement from the scene before me. I could add nothing to the pleasures of the day, and I was determined not to diminish them. Besides, I was aware, that fox-hunters, perhaps, more than any other set of men give way to a freedom of discourse to which, I was not so lost to decency as to become a listener in the presence of my son. I could not prevent its taking place, but there was no necessity for me to countenance it.

I retired to my study. The time which was to put an end to my embarrassments, and again to set me free in the world had now arrived, but I felt far from satisfied. A secret dread

seemed to be hanging over me for which I could in no way account. I saw before me the means of enjoying comforts for the future, not indeed, upon the scale to which I had been accustomed, but fully adequate to my wants or to my desires, but still the prospect did not cheer me. Every thing that I could desire was within my reach, but I was far from feeling myself in a state of tranquillity. I was not miserable, but I cannot say that I was happy.

I was disturbed from this melancholy train of thought by a cry I heard in the passage that Lord Winterbourne was dying. I rushed to the dining-room and found him lying upon the floor deprived of sense and motion. His face was black, and bore evident marks of suffocation. A young surgeon who chanced to be at the table attempted to draw blood from him,

and exerted himself in the application of the usual remedies. But it was too late. The vital spark was extinct, and I had not only to mourn the loss of a son who promised to be an honour and a blessing to me, but that too at the critical moment when he was so essentially necessary, if not to my existence, at least to my well being in the world.

A look of consternation pervaded the whole company. In one or two of the countenances I could read not only an inward horror of the event, but also a secret consciousness of guilt. I fearfully cast my eyes around, in expectation of being told the causes which had led to the unfortunate catastrophe, for I could not bring myself to believe that it could have happened from natural means. But finding that a dead silence prevailed, I tremblingly ventured to enquire of the surgeon who had officiat-

ed, and who still hung about the body.

After some hesitation on the part of my informer, I learnt that my unhappy boy had fallen a victim to the disposition I have formerly mentioned of doing any thing that he was *dared* to do, without giving a moment's consideration to the consequences of the act. Sir Timothy Sweepstakes, and his noble colleague in debauchery, Lord Rasper, had made up their minds to christen Charles, as they called it, by leading him into a state of intoxication. The forbearance of Charles had only stimulated their exertions, and made them more eager to conquer his repugnance to the bottle. Soon after I left the room the wine was succeeded by the punch bowl, accompanied by the apparatus for preserving the liquor at the desired degree of heat.

Sir Timothy Sweepstakes had al-



ways prided himself on being an admirable manufacturer of punch, and on this occasion insisted upon officiating in honour, as he termed it, of his young friend. In the beverage which the baronet composed, the smallest part of the ingredients was water, but the company, however, had so far lost sight of reason to partake of it. Charles alone was proof against solicitation, having been most seriously cautioned against the use of spirituous liquors. He stoutly maintained his resolution until Sir Timothy having first emptied an additional bottle of brandy into the larger bowl, took a smaller one which was capable of containing about a quart, and filling it with the hot punch, thus strengthened, offered a wager of five hundred pounds that no one would drink it at two draughts, allowing an interval of three minutes between the operations of swallowing.

The scheme of Sir Timothy was completely successful. The rash boy caught at the wager, seized the bowl, and before he could be prevented had nearly emptied its contents. The bowl fell from his hands upon the floor, he sunk back in his chair—struggled for an instant—but before the efforts of nature could be assisted, breathed his last——a victim to the brutality and intemperance of a beast in the human form. The alarm was instantly given. The unfortunate youth was placed on the floor. The windows were thrown open for the admission of air, and in that state I discovered him, a melancholy spectacle of obstinate presumption.

My own sufferings were of too acute a nature to allow me to pay much attention to what was passing in the dining-room, but the awful looks of those that had witnessed the calamity

and the conscience stricken visages of the great actors in this melancholy scene are still before my eyes. The house of rejoicing became instantaneously the house of mourning, and the gloom which overspread the cheerful faces of those who were innocently partaking of the festal enjoyment, would have satisfied the most enthusiastic anchorite. The cup hung upon the lip, the dance ceased, the gambols were closed, and the happy beings who had been partakers in the general joy, gradually retreated. In a short time the place was a dreary waste—I must drop the pen—

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An end was now put to all my hopes. Nothing but dreariness was before me. No means were left to me for the payment of my creditors. To act with common honesty towards them, which I was resolved to do, to the utmost

extent of my power, I must have delivered up to them, every thing that was at present in my possession. My incumbrances were so enormous, that in the natural course of things, I could not expect to out-live the discharge of my debts, even if I transferred over the whole amount of my income for that purpose.

I regretted the loss of my son for his own sake. Possibly more on that account than for the situation in which his death had placed me. I say possibly, because I have been unable to analyze my feelings with that exactness which would allow me to determine whether they were most swayed by parental fondness, or by a sense of honour, for in that light I always viewed even a tradesman's debt. At all events I was miserable.

I wrote to Lady Erpingham an account of the melancholy event which

had bereft us of our surviving child. My letter was dictated by my feelings, but I had not that command over myself to weigh the words as they escaped from my pen. I thought that on such an occasion her heart would vibrate with my own.

But whether my epistle was wanting in the proper forms, or whether it contained expressions, which did not exactly accord with her ladyship's views of mortality, I cannot say. I was fool enough to expect that such a subject would have been thought worthy of personal exertion, and that her reply would have been given in her own hand. The loss of an only child, however, made no difference in the established regulations ;—the answer was as usual from Miss Toadeater. Her ladyship lamented the circumstance, but felt thoroughly satisfied that she had fulfilled the duties of a

mother. She had caused directions to be given for the immediate preparation of a patent coffin, and had given instructions to an undertaker, eminent for his taste and classical knowledge, to conduct the funeral. The ceremonials her ladyship had ordered to be such as the noble blood of the Vavasours were entitled to, and she hoped at my earliest convenience to receive authentic accounts of the whole having been *performed* with the utmost magnificence. Miss Toadeather was kindly desired further to inform me, that her ladyship being aware of my uncomfortable situation with regard to pecuniary matters, had engaged to be responsible to the undertaker for all his charges. Her ladyship attached one condition to her condescension—my son was to be buried at Erpingham.

In compliance with the request of the countess, the remains of my son

were conveyed to the family vault at Erpingham. The style of the funeral perfectly accorded with her ladyship's wishes. To add to its dignity, and to shew her regard to the deceased, the mother sent the carriage which she most frequently used, to accompany the procession.



## CHAP. XVI.

*CONCLUSION.*

IT now became incumbent upon me to meet my creditors, and to lay before them a statement of my affairs. I dreaded the idea of being a pensioner upon the bounty of Lady Erpingham ; indeed, my spirit sunk, and dejected as it was, could never have submitted to such degradation. I should otherwise have given up the whole of the income I then possessed. But even while I am talking of accepting Lady Erpingham's bounty, I have no reason



to suppose that it would have been offered. Her ladyship might, indeed, have kindly acceded to me an apartment in her houses, and a seat at her table; and her pride, which would have been my only ground of dependance, might have induced her to discharge a tailor's bill that her husband might not be a disgrace to her.

As it was, I expressed a readiness to yield up all my interest in the Bingwood property, upon receiving an annuity of only five hundred per annum, and a general release. It was accepted by the majority, and trustees were appointed to carry the arrangements into effect. But an obstacle was created by some creditors more unreasonable than the rest, who pointed out that I was entitled to the Erpingham estates on the death of my wife. According to Lady Erpingham's habits of life, she seemed to bid fair to

reach the age of Methusaleh; to obviate that difficulty, therefore, I threw my reversionary interest into the bargain, stipulating, however, that in case of any accident befalling her ladyship at an earlier period than might be expected, that every thing should be my own again, when the principal and interest of the several debts should be entirely discharged. I had little hope of such a happy event, but it was still within the verge of possibility. I considered, however, that the chances were so greatly against the probability that I can safely say, the attentions I paid to Lady Erpingham, were purely disinterested. I received nothing from her while she was living, and I had now no motive to wish for her death, for even were such an event to take place immediately I could scarcely look forward to the enjoyment of the property.

From a splendid fortune and the brightest prospects, I now saw myself reduced to an income of five hundred a year. I was childless, and deprived of fortune. I had not the disposal of a single shilling after my decease, and could therefore hold out no hopes to any one, whom interest would induce to bear with my humours, and to smooth the pillow of declining age. My breast revolted at the thought of even partaking of my own property, when it was the boon of my wife. On my circumscribed income I determined to subsist, and laboured hard to reduce my wants to my present means.

My retirement from a world in which I had experienced little else than misery excited no degree of surprise, for not one human being took an interest in my welfare. My creditors had insured my life, and as the insurances were paid from my estates,

they cared but little whether I lived or died. I left behind me no one whose affections were due to me, or on whose friendship I had the slightest claim. When I expressed my determination to seclude myself from the vices and follies of mankind, the pride of Lady Erpingham did, indeed, induce her to offer her husband an asylum, which I have no doubt she would have afforded. Nay, perhaps, had her husband been in actual want, her pride would have tempted her to administer relief. But had I been mean enough to have availed myself of her bounty, I should have been only an humble addition to her empty state, and have been placed in a situation similar to that of Bajazet in his cage of iron. I should have been exposed to the finger of ridicule, and continually reminded of what I had been. As it was, I was independent, much more so in reality with my

slender pittance, than when I rolled in useless thousands. There was now no temptation to deceive me, nor motive to mislead me. I was enabled to view the world in its natural colours, and to rest satisfied that self-interest is the only diety, where the worship is free from hypocrisy, and that no man fails to prey upon his neighbour, except in cases where his advantage is greater from an opposite line of conduct.

I have now lived some years in a state of dull quiescence, bordering upon tranquillity, but without its sweets. At a distance from the busy "hum of men," I hear of little that makes me regret the change, but on the contrary, I hear of nothing which reconciles me to it. My feelings have rusted for want of use, and I am alike dead to sensations of pleasure or of pain. I have known sufficient of the

miseries of being in debt to induce me to live within my allotted pittance which is regularly transmitted to me. I have wandered from place to place, not in search of happiness, for that was beyond my contemplation, but in search of the means of consuming the vacant hours. I have dropped, and almost forgotten my titles, and have, indeed, almost lost the remembrance of myself.

There is nothing in my past life on which I can dwell with satisfaction. Conscious as I read of my own neglected education, I criminally permitted my own children to pursue the same path. For their errors and follies I was answerable, for I should have taught them otherwise. It is not, I will admit, in the power of one person to *form* the heart of another, but much may in all cases be done towards moulding it for the proper performance

of the duties of life. Neither Charles nor his sister were deficient in essential qualifications, but their minds were warped by improper indulgence, and culpable indifference on the part of their natural protectors.

I have, perhaps, gone a little farther than I am actually warranted, in saying that I had nothing to cheer me, for my heart holds out to me the consolation that in my progress through life I have been more unfortunate than culpable. I was trully unfortunate in not possessing, at the time the disposition becomes fixed and settled, the advantages to be derived from the superintendence of any one on whom I could look with reverence and respect, and on whose opinions I had been early taught to place reliance.

I had, it is true, the sense to be fully aware of my father's follies, and yet, had the weakness to fall into the

same pit. I blamed him for aiming to dupe his son, in order to support his extravagance, and was compelled by necessity to resort to the same course of proceeding with my own child.

My heart once was capable of feeling an ardent attachment, and heaven only knows how fervently I loved. Still I could in great measure acquit myself of blame, in my transactions with Lydia Berrington. I was, perhaps, hasty, too hasty, in plunging into an abyss of passion, and I was equally blameable in a too rapid assumption of prudence. But to have satisfied my mind, when doubts had been created, was due to myself, particularly as I had so lately been the victim of early impressions; and although I was satisfied that most of the miscarriages in life are the result of imprudence, and miscalculation, yet in my own case I have sometimes been tempted to think



that fate had set a spell upon me. At least, I am anxious to believe that she did so, in separating me from the being whom my heart had chosen.

Whatever miseries I experienced in my marriage with Lady Erpingham, I richly deserved them. It was interest, and interest alone, which led to the connection, and it was interest that virtually dissolved it. They who form an union from similar motives, have no right to complain of the unhappiness which must necessarily follow.

I spare myself the recapitulation of any other parts of my history. It may, perhaps, be instructive to others, but it can be of no service to myself. I have endeavoured to prepare my mind for an event, which must ere long happen, and I can assure the reader that the present work has in no small degree tended to the composure I have

long been endeavouring to obtain. I have exerted myself to give a faithful picture of my feelings, and a true account of my actions. If I have disguised, or concealed any material it has been through inadvertency. The world, as I have already said, I have long done with, and of the reader I now finally take my leave.

FINIS.







